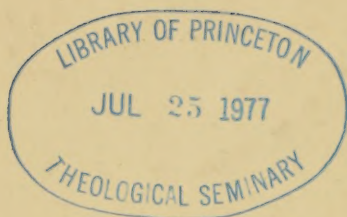




# Jesus Christ

The Unique Revealer of God

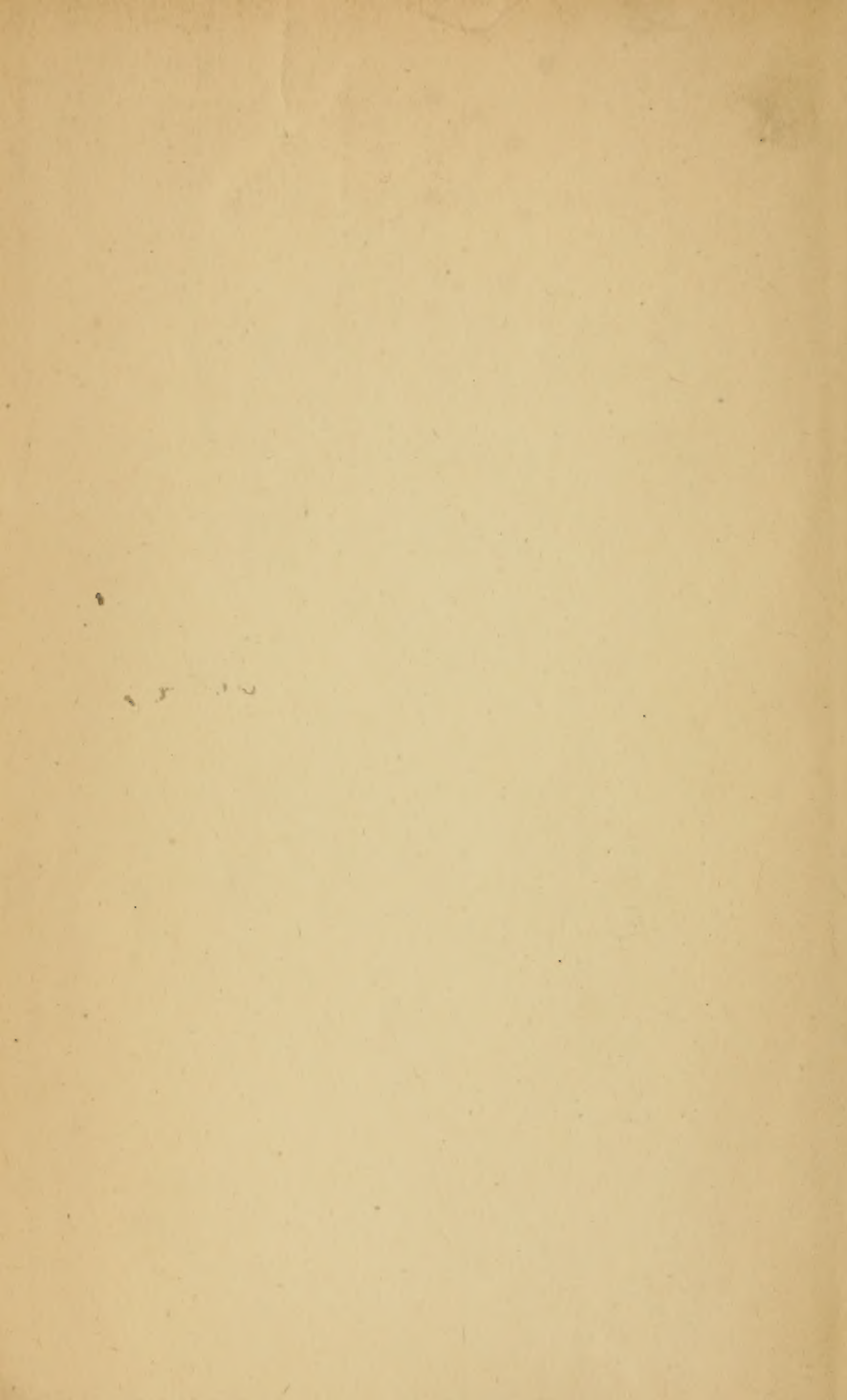
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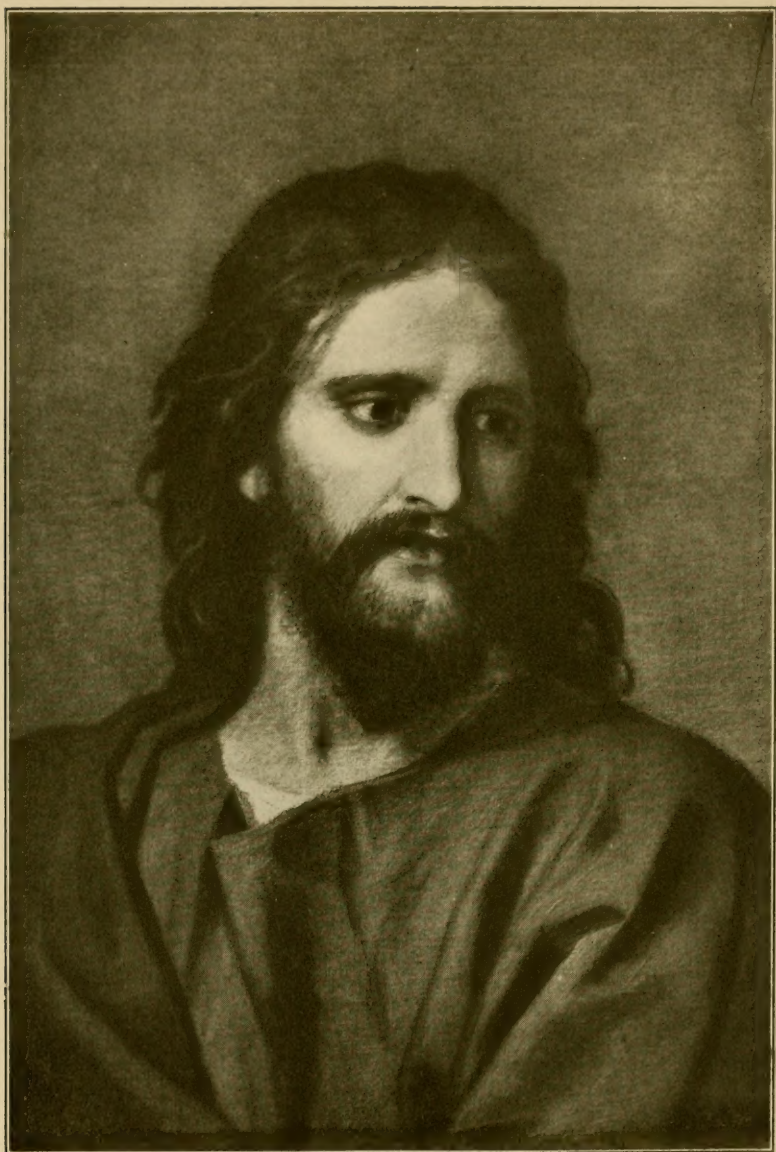
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THE SON OF MAN

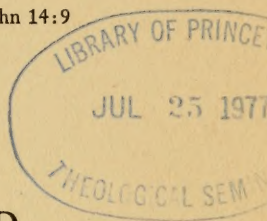
*Engraved from the Famous Painting of "Christ and the Rich Young Ruler"*

# JESUS CHRIST

## THE UNIQUE REVEALER OF GOD

He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.—John 14:9

By  
JOSEPH T. GIBSON, D.D.



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DEDICATED TO THE SACRED MEMORY OF  
MY DEAR WIFE, ISABEL, WHOSE PURE,  
GENTLE AND LOVING COMPANIONSHIP FOR  
MANY YEARS WAS A CONSTANT MANIFESTATION OF THE POWER OF DIVINE LOVE  
DWELLING IN A HUMAN HEART, AND  
WHOSE GOING TO THE FATHER'S HOUSE  
HAS BROUGHT HEAVEN NEARER, MAKING  
THE LOVE AND THE PROMISES OF JESUS  
MORE REAL AND MORE PRECIOUS



## PREFACE

**I**N preparing this volume the author has sought to see and to aid others in seeing Jesus Christ as he is presented to men in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. It is designed especially for those who accept the Word of God which is contained in the sacred Scriptures as the only infallable and sufficient rule of faith and duty. It recognizes the Christian religion as a unique, supernatural, revealed religion. It recognizes Jesus Christ as the great center of beneficent attraction and the only adequate source of power for the development of perfect manhood. In Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, this volume finds the one name that binds into one book the thirty-nine pamphlets of the Old Testament and the twenty-seven of the New Testament. It is, therefore, first of all designed for those who wish to see Jesus Christ as He is presented to men in the Bible.

Nevertheless, this volume has a message for those who have not accepted the Bible as a divinely inspired book and have not accepted Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. Jesus Christ has exerted such an influence on the world as to arrest the attention of all intelligent men in every part of the world. During his public ministry his mighty works and wondrous words so interested men that "he could not be hid." After his death, resurrection and ascension, his fame went abroad into all the world, and he has come to be recognized as the center of beneficent attraction for all men of every race and nation. No intelligent man can afford in this day to ignore the world-wide influence of the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth, and this volume is designed to aid all who are sincerely inquiring what they ought to do with him.

Moreover the believer finds in the history of the incarnation, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ a character sketch that is infinitely superior to all the works of fiction that the most gifted imagination ever invented, for eye hath not seen, nor ear heard nor the heart of man conceived anything so wonderful as the person and work of Immanuel.

The author has reckoned literary beauty less important than accurate statements of what is found in the inspired records, and, when it has seemed necessary, has not hesitated to interrupt the smooth flow of the narrative in order to secure exact statement of important facts.

The suggestions of the godly and scholarly men who have devoted their lives to the great work of helping others to see Jesus as the Way, the Truth and the Life, have been used freely, but their names have only been mentioned when their words as well as their thoughts were used.

In seeking to harmonize the narratives of the four evangelists the order of events that seemed to do least violence to any of the inspired records has been chosen.

How far this work may confirm the faith and stimulate the devotion of others the writer does not know, but he can say with sincere and profound gratitude that his labours have been amply rewarded by the glimpses he has caught of the Perfect Man, and by the fellowship he has enjoyed as he studied this wondrous life. His own experience confirms the belief that the weary, the discouraged, the anxious, the labouring and heavy-laden can find rest and peace by coming to Jesus Christ and learning of him who was meek and lowly in heart. "To every one that believeth he is precious."

*Pittsburgh.*

J. T. G.



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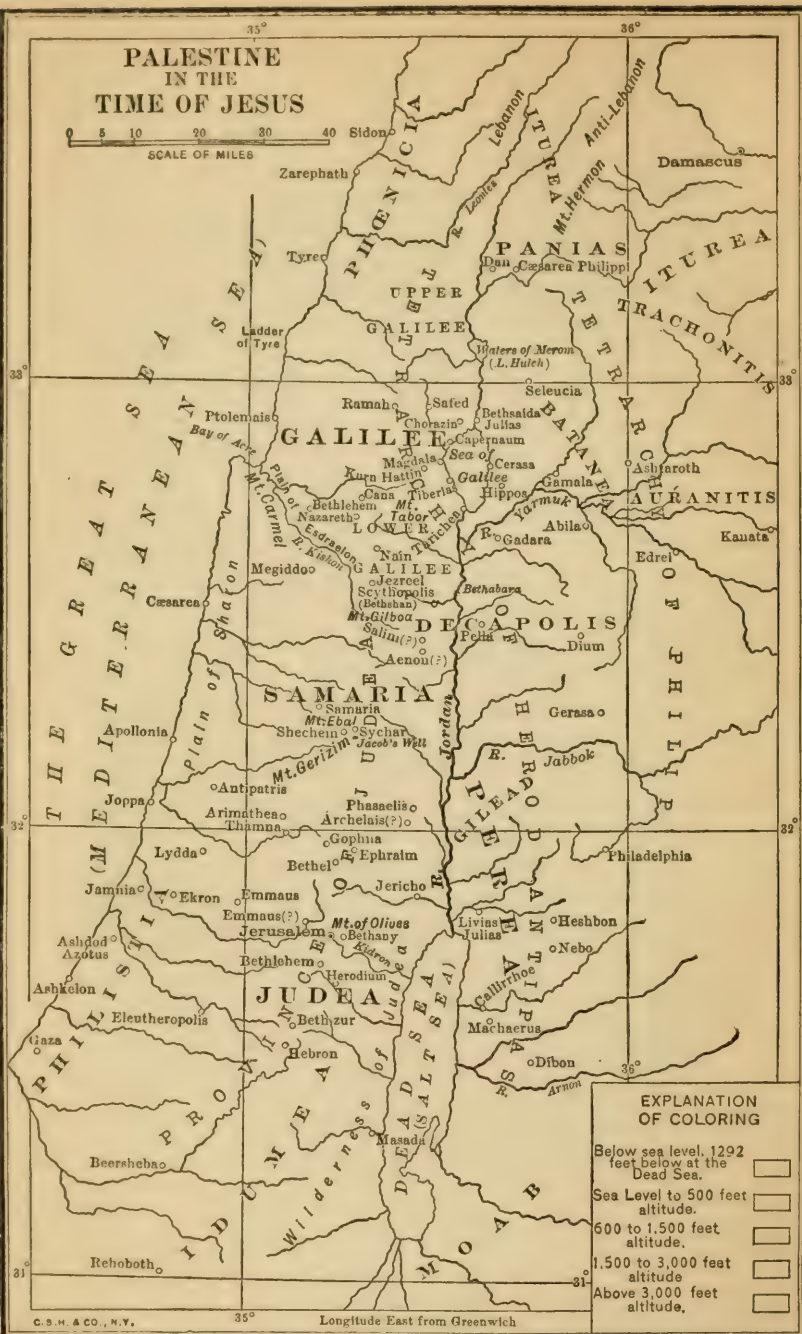
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## I

### THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST

Luke 2:15. "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing that is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us."

(Matthew 1:1-25; Luke 1:1-2:20, and 2:23-38; John 1:1-14.)

WHILE Judean shepherds were watching their flocks by night in the neighbourhood of the little town of Bethlehem, Judea, they saw an angel of the Lord standing by them, and the glory of the Lord shining round about them, and they were sore afraid. The angel said to them, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all the people; for there is born to you this day a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." The angel then added, "Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. When the angel had said this, suddenly there was with him a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest,  
And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased."

After seeing the angel, hearing his message and listening to the heavenly choir, the shepherds said to each other, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing that is come to pass which the Lord hath made known

## 14 JESUS CHRIST, THE REVEALER OF GOD

unto us." When they came to the little village they found a babe lying in the manger of a stable attached to the overcrowded inn.

Who is this little child? What is known of his parentage and why is he introduced to the world in this unique and marvelous way?

It is important that we should have a definite answer to these questions if we are to understand and rightly interpret his life. Seeking these answers, one might be willing to go to Bethlehem in order to talk with the shepherds and see what they saw, but this is impossible, for all this came to pass more than nineteen hundred years ago. One might go to the little white town five miles from Jerusalem, he might visit the church of the Nativity as it stands above the orchards and vineyards surrounding the village; he might look into a cave that is called the Cave of the Nativity, but all this would do very little in the way of helping him to know the profound meaning of the angel's message. Nor would it avail much if one could go back nineteen hundred years and see just what the shepherds saw with the outward eye. They saw only a little child wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger. Many of those who dwelt in Bethlehem at the time Jesus was born either knew nothing of the event or thought of it with indifference.

The principal source of information for determining the identity of this child is a book that Christians call the Bible, comprising the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. The Old Testament, comprising thirty-nine books is identical with the sacred writings of the Hebrew nation that were in existence at the time this child was born. These sacred writings, after giving an account of the creation of the parents of mankind, of their living in Eden in holy and happy communion and covenant re-

lations with their Creator, go on to tell a marvelous story of their rebellion against God and of their expulsion from Eden. As these parents of mankind stood outside the barred gates of the earthly paradise, they had from their Creator a promise that the seed of the woman should destroy the tempter who led them in rebellion against God. How far they understood the profound meaning of that promise, no one can tell. Of the times and the seasons, of the long years of sin and suffering, of the clearer and more complete revelation that must precede and prepare the way for its fulfillment, they knew nothing, but they were saved by hope. The most careful students of these sacred scriptures believe that these promises had their fulfillment in the birth of the Babe of Bethlehem.

These sacred writings of the Hebrews, after giving a brief sketch of the descendants of the parents of mankind during many centuries, devote many pages to an account of the life of Abraham, the fountain head of Hebrew history. This man was called of God to go forth from Ur of the Chaldees across the great river Euphrates, and journey through the land now called Palestine that was to him a land of promise. According to these Hebrew scriptures God had promised Abraham that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. He seemed to have no knowledge of the time that must intervene before the promise should be fulfilled, but in the light of the promise given to him he looked down through the ages, saw Christ's day and rejoiced in it. He could not discern the externals, as the Judean shepherds did when they saw the infant Saviour lying in a manger, but he did see the promised seed in whom all nations should find a blessing. The child born at Bethlehem is the promised seed of Abraham.

These Hebrew scriptures give a brief history of the descendants of Abraham, telling of their journey through the Land of Palestine unto the third generation when they go down into Egypt and afterwards become slaves to the Egyptians. After speaking of their tears and cries on account of Egyptian oppression they tell the story of deliverance by one of their own nation named Moses, who was saved from death by an Egyptian princess, educated in the palace, chose afflictions with the Hebrew slaves, rather than the honours of the Egyptians; became a shepherd in the wilderness, talked with God at Horeb, and became the deliverer of his people. This Moses said to his people, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken." This promise was cherished by the nation, and students of these scriptures find its fulfillment in the birth of Christ.

The students of these Hebrew scriptures, from the time of Moses, find in them constant reference to this promised seed of Abraham, and each succeeding reference seems to become more definite. A prophet who loves the wages of unrighteousness claims that he is controlled by the divine Spirit as he says, when he refuses to curse Israel,

"I see him, but not now,  
I behold him, but not nigh,  
There shall come forth a star out of Jacob  
And a scepter shall arise out of Israel."

In this prophecy one may see, not only David, the king of Israel, but David's greater Son,—the Babe of Bethlehem. Again a promise is given to David that his seed should sit on his throne forever, and an intimation is given that the fruit of David's body and the son of David



should be more than the son of David, because the prophecy reads :

"I will tell the decree,  
The Lord said unto me, thou art my son,  
This day have I begotten thee."

Isaiah, the great evangelistic prophet of these Old Testament Scriptures, says, "There shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit, and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him." This promise is repeated in the prophecy of Jeremiah, as he writes, "Behold, the day is come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth." Then Isaiah writes, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel": and, again this great prophet seems to be carried forward, so as to be living amid the scenes of his prophetic vision, and he writes, "Unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulders; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to establish it."

After Isaiah comes the prophet Daniel who, in the judgment of many Biblical scholars, fixes the time, as he says, "Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem unto the Christ, the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and three score and two weeks." Then there is the prophet Micah telling the place, as he says, "Thou Bethlehem, Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth

## 18 JESUS CHRIST, THE REVEALER OF GOD

unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

In the light of these and many other Old Testament Scriptures we come to Bethlehem, and see the virgin-born Son of God, the promised Saviour. Here is the fulfillment of the promises. Here is the one point to which the rays of spiritual light from the promises, prophecies and types of the Old Testament converge. Here is Israel's consolation and the hope of a lost world, the Babe of Bethlehem.

The second great source of information concerning this child is the New Testament. Three New Testament writers, Matthew, Luke and John, tell of this child, but each in his own way and from his own view point. They introduce their sketches of the life of Jesus Christ by telling either of his parentage, or of his pre-existence. Matthew and Luke give extended genealogies, Matthew going backward to Abraham, and Luke going backward to the parents of mankind. John tells of the pre-existence of Christ as the Son of God before the creation of the world.

It is not necessary to turn aside from the narrative and enter into a discussion as to how the genealogies of Luke and Matthew can be mutually reconciled. They are independent records, and our not being able to harmonize them at all points only indicates lack of knowledge of all the times and all the circumstances. It may be said, however, that Luke tells of the birth of Christ from the viewpoint of Mary, the virgin mother, that Matthew tells of the same event as it was revealed to Joseph the husband of Mary, and John speaks of it as the heavenly Father sees it.

First of all the evangelist John gives to this little child an absolutely unique place amongst the children of men

by declaring his personal pre-existence as the Word of God. He says "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made. In him was life and the life was the light of men." He goes on to say "The Word became flesh, and dwelt amongst us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father) full of grace, and truth."

The events in immediate connection with the birth of the child are as follows. An aged and righteous priest named Zacharias, ministering in his appointed course at the temple, entered into the holy place to burn incense. The multitude were praying without. Zacharias saw an angel standing at the right side of the altar of incense, and was awe stricken. The angel said to him, "Fear not, Zacharias; thy supplication is heard, and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. Thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth; for he shall be great in the sight of the Lord." The angel then revealed to Zacharias that his son should come in the spirit of Elijah and that he should be the herald and forerunner of the Christ. When Zacharias doubted and asked for a sign, the angel said to him, "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and I was sent to speak unto thee and to bring thee these good tidings. And, behold, thou shalt be silent and not able to speak until the day that these things shall come to pass."

Six months after this the angel Gabriel came to Nazareth, an obscure village of Gallilee, to a maiden named Mary, betrothed to a man named Joseph. The angel saluted Mary saying, "Hail, thou art highly favoured;

the Lórd is with thee." Then the angel revealed to Mary the great secret of the ages, the coming fulfillment of the many promises and prophecies of the Old Testament Scriptures, telling her of the miraculous conception and birth of her son, who should be called the Son of the Most High, and to whom the Lord God would give the throne of David.

After Mary had heard the angel's message she went on a journey to a little town in the hill country of Judah to spend three months with Elisabeth, the wife of Zacharias. Her heart overflowed with joy and she said,

"My soul doth magnify the Lord,  
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour,  
For he hath looked upon the low estate of his hand maiden;  
For behold henceforth all generations shall call me blessed."

Mary was betrothed to a man named Joseph at the time of the miraculous conception. An angel visited Joseph and said to him, "Thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost; and she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save the people from their sins." The angel also told Joseph that this had come to pass as the fulfillment of a prophecy. The prophecy reads as follows: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which, being interpreted, is God with us."

After Mary returned to Nazareth the promised son was born to Zacharias, and the father, who had been unable to speak from the time the angel appeared to him and announced the birth of his son, wrote, "His name shall be called John." The long silence was then broken and

Zacharias, filled with the Holy Ghost, uttered his song of praise, saying:

“Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel;  
For he hath visited, and wrought redemption for his people.”

Mary's home was in Nazareth, but the Christ of prophecy was to be born in Bethlehem. How can this prophecy be fulfilled? This question is answered in a way that indicates how the ruler of men makes all things work together for the accomplishment of his purposes. Augustus Cæsar, the emperor at Rome, does not dream that he is helping to carry out any divine plan and fulfill a divine promise that a child shall be born at Bethlehem, Judea, instead of being born at Nazareth in Galilee. Nevertheless, Augustus issues a decree for a world wide enrollment of his subjects. This decree comes to be an essential part of the divine plan that this child should be born in Bethlehem. Joseph and Mary were both of the tribe of Judah, of the line of David, and, in order to keep up their tribal relations, must be enrolled at Bethlehem. It is a long journey, but sacred rites and sacred duties are involved, and Joseph with Mary, his betrothed wife, do not fail to appear in Bethlehem for enrollment. While in Bethlehem Mary brought forth her first born, wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. The world had been thousands of years preparing for this event; prophets had foretold it, fixing definitely the time and the place; the angel Gabriel had announced that the time was at hand; a Roman emperor had sent out into all his provinces a decree that was an essential part of the preparation, and yet the Son of God was cradled in a manger, because there was no room for the mother and child in the inn.



## 22 JESUS CHRIST, THE REVEALER OF GOD

Any one who believes that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are in any sense a divine revelation and not mere dreams, will see in the birth of this little child the greatest event in human history. This child is the promised seed of the woman that should bruise the head of the serpent, the promised seed of Abraham in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed, the virgin born Son of God, who is to be the Saviour of a lost world.

## II

### THE INFANCY OF JESUS CHRIST

Mat. 2: 16. "Out of Egypt did I call my son."

(Mat. 2: 1-23; Luke 2: 21-39.)

**T**HE evangelists only tell of five events connected with the first eleven years of the life of the little child that was born at Bethlehem. Luke tells of his circumcision and of his presentation in the temple, while Matthew tells of the coming of wise men from the East, of his being carried down into Egypt and of his return to Nazareth. Matthew records events that are remarkable fulfillments of Old Testament prophecies and Luke tells of the careful observance of Old Testament rites.

The mutual independence of the two narratives may leave room for doubt as to the exact order in which these two events occurred. The circumcision was on the eighth day, and the presentation at the temple could not take place before the fortieth day. It does not seem possible that the wise men came until after the presentation at the temple.

Concerning the first event, Luke, after telling of the visit of the shepherds, adds, "And when eight days were fulfilled for circumcising him, his name was called Jesus, which was so called by the angel before he was conceived."

This brief statement reveals God's wondrous patience in the outworking of his great scheme of redemption.

## 24 JESUS CHRIST, THE REVEALER OF GOD

Two thousand years had elapsed since circumcision had been given to Abraham as the sign and seal of the covenant, and now the promised seed of Abraham is circumcised.

There is no detailed account of the presentation in the temple. The law of Moses, Leviticus 12, specifies that the mother of a first born son should appear at the temple on the fortieth day after the birth of her child, bringing with her a lamb for a burnt offering. If the mother could not afford a lamb she was to offer two turtle doves or two young pigeons. Mary belonged to this latter class. When she brought the Lord of the temple to the temple of the Lord she could only offer the two turtle doves or the two young pigeons. The presentation of this Babe seemed to the ordinary beholder a very unimportant event. There was, however, a devout and venerable man at Jerusalem at that time named Simeon who had been looking for the consolation of Israel and the Holy Spirit was upon him. The Holy Spirit had revealed to this man that he should not die until he had seen the Lord's Christ. When the parents brought the child Jesus to the temple Simeon was led by the Spirit into the temple, and he took the little child in his arms and blessed God saying,

"Now lettest thou thy servant depart, O Lord,  
According to thy word, in peace,  
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,  
Which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples,  
A light for revelation to the Gentiles,  
And the glory of thy people Israel."

Then, turning to the astonished parents, he blessed them, and said unto Mary, "Behold this child is set for the falling and rising up of many in Israel, and for a sign which is spoken against; yea, and a sword shall

pierce through thine own soul, that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed." Simeon had scarcely uttered these words when an aged prophetess, named Anna, who had not departed from the temple for many years, but had worshipped with fasting and supplications night and day, came forward and gave thanks to God, speaking to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

If there were no other sources of information than the gospel by Luke, we might infer that Joseph and Mary had gone from Jerusalem directly to their home in Nazareth; but, when we turn to the gospel by Matthew, we find a record of events that could hardly have preceded Christ's presentation at the temple. These events connect this little child with Egypt in a remarkable way, and are declared to be the fulfillment of an Old Testament prophecy found in the book of Hosea. This prophecy reads, "When Israel was a child, then I loved him and called my son out of Egypt."

Matthew introduces his account of these events by saying that, when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him."

Who these wise men were, their number, their names and whence they came, we are not told. Such historians as Tacitus, Suetonius and Josephus tell us that at that time throughout all the East there was a belief that a monarch would arise in Judea, and that he should wield a sceptre of universal dominion. We only know that these Magi were from the East, and they probably shared this general expectation. The traditions that they were kings, that they were Arabians, that their names were Melchior, Caspar and Balthasar, and that they were de-

scendants of Shem, Ham and Japheth, can be traced to no reliable source, and are of no value. Neither do we know anything about the new star, except what we learn from the inspired record. If, by our study of astronomy, we could see, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that there was at that time a most extraordinary conjunction of the planets, and that a new star or meteor had appeared and hovered over Jerusalem and Bethlehem, it would not be of any value as a confirmation of Christian faith. One class of men would say that it proved the history true; another class would say, with equal reason, that it disproved the miraculous and supernatural. It would be of no value either way. The whole narrative of the birth and life of Jesus Christ, as we have it from the different evangelists, lifts it out of the realm of the natural.

Herod, the king, heard of the coming of these wise men and of their search and was troubled. Our knowledge of Herod, derived from other sources, enables us to appreciate the full meaning of this statement. This was Herod the Great, the builder of the temple, the murderer of his wife and of his own sons, and of most of his relatives. His life of splendid, but criminal and miserable success was rapidly sinking into jealous, savage decrepitude. But he was as crafty as he was cruel, as diplomatic as he was blood thirsty, and, though war was in his heart, his words were smoother than butter. He summoned all the chief priests and scribes of the people, and inquired of them where the Christ should be born. They answered, "In Bethlehem of Judea," and quoted as their authority the prophecy of Micah. Herod had a private conference with the wise men, in which he inquired carefully when the star appeared, and then said, "Go and search out exactly concerning the young child; and, when



ye have found him, bring me word, that I also may come and worship him."

Leaving Herod, the wise men followed the star to Bethlehem till it came and stood over where the young child was. With great joy they came into the house, and, seeing the young child with Mary his mother, they fell down and worshipped him and offered unto him gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Whether the Magi suspected Herod of treachery, we do not know, but when they were about to return to their own country, they were warned of God to not tell Herod, and they returned by another way. They had come suddenly out of the East and, as suddenly, they disappeared. In their own way and time they had performed their part in recognizing the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh.

After they had departed, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, telling him to take the young child and his mother and flee into Egypt, and remain there until called thence, for Herod would seek to kill the child. Joseph obeyed promptly, and thus prepared the way for the fulfillment of the word of the Lord, as he had said by his prophet Hosea, "Out of Egypt have I called my son."

Of the journey into Egypt, and of the time spent there, nothing is known except by inference from a very brief record. No reliance can be placed on the apocryphal stories that have been perpetuated by Italian art. If any attempt should be made to fill in the picture it would be well to do it in the light of the inspired narrative, taking no notice of silly legends and traditions. It was at least three days' journey and they were no doubt three days of anxiety for Joseph and Mary until they passed beyond Herod's jurisdiction. Nothing is known of their ex-

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periences while they remained in Egypt; but after the death of Herod the Great, by divine direction, they returned to the land of Israel. When they heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in the room of his father Herod, warned of God in a dream, the parents of Jesus withdrew into the parts of Galilee and came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth.

When Herod found that he had been mocked by the wise men, he threw off the mask, and, in his rage, sent forth and slew all the male children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof from two years old and under, according to the time that he had inquired of the wise men. By this act he brought about the fulfillment of a prophecy of Jeremiah, saying,

"A voice was heard in Ramah,  
Weeping and great mourning,  
Rachel weeping for her children  
And she would not be comforted, because they were not."

Not long after this event, Herod died, and went to render his account to the great Judge of all the earth. His whole career had been marked with crime and murder. He had murdered priests and nobles; his hands were red with the blood of his own kindred, including his wife, his children and his brethren; and, now, he stands out as the first and fiercest enemy of the innocent Babe of Bethlehem. From reliable, secular historians we learn that his death furnished a fitting end to his life. In a luxurious palace, in Jericho, suffering intense pain, swollen with a loathsome disease, surrounded by plotting, selfish, greedy slaves; hating all, and hated by all; longing to die, and yet afraid to die, he seemed to be suffering the doom of the lost, even before the spirit left the body.

This whole record shows how the outworking of God's sovereign and revealed will includes the most malicious acts of wicked men. They act freely, but God makes their wrath to praise him, and restrains the remainder of wrath. Herod, the enemy of God and of his only begotten Son, is used of God in the outworking of his eternal, holy and loving purposes toward the children of men. How far Satan controls and directs the acts of wicked men in all the ages no one knows, but it is evident that wicked men are moved and controlled by the same spirit in all generations. When the ruler of Egypt decreed that all the male children of Hebrew slaves should be put to death, he was moved by selfishness, and could plead the Satanic law of self-preservation; when Herod the king sought the life of the infant Jesus, he was moved by the same spirit and could plead the same law; but both Pharaoh and Herod were used to advance God's purposes of love toward his own people. Herod might rage, but the little child born in Bethlehem was perfectly safe until the fullness of time. The angels of the Lord were encamping round about him, and God knew perfectly the plan of every enemy.

The same may be said of every true disciple of Christ, whether weak or strong. God's angels guard his little ones and they have nothing to fear from powerful and plotting enemies. It seems strange that Herod did not recognize his impotence; but, like Pharaoh, he was blinded by the hardness of an unbelieving, selfish heart, and, going his own way, "he went to his own place." Herod was a typical character. Every man who lives wholly for self is the mortal enemy of the Christ of God. Between the spirit of Christ and the spirit of Herod there is an eternal, irreconcilable conflict, a mortal antipathy. Herod would have others die that he might live. The

Christ came to die that others might live. The spirit of Herod is the spirit of Satan and of hell. The Spirit of Christ is the spirit of God and of heaven. Christ came to destroy the works of Satan, and Satan sought to destroy the Christ. This was the first attempt, and it failed, for "The Child grew and waxed strong, being filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him."

If any one should object to this definite personification of the forces that make for good and evil in the world, he can hardly deny that there are such forces, either abstract or personal. If one admits the existence of such forces, it certainly is not irrational to associate them with persons especially when there is scriptural authority for so doing.

### III

## THE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS CHRIST

Luke 2:40. "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him."

(Luke 2:40-50.)

**C**ONCERNING the childhood of Jesus, after the return to Nazareth, Luke alone gives any reliable information. In the apocryphal gospels many childish stories are found, but none of them have any value except that they reveal, by contrast, the matchless dignity and simplicity of the inspired gospels. Writers of these apocryphal gospels, no doubt, had pious intentions when they sought to fill out, by the exercise of their imagination, what appeared to be lacking in the childlife of Jesus, but their acts were not essentially different from the act of Uzzah when he put forth his hand to support the ark of God. These apocryphal gospels, like semi-historical novels, pervert rather than teach real history. In the life of Jesus Christ, where so much depends on the actual truthfulness of every part of the record, there should be no attempt to interweave fact and fiction.

The evangelist Luke reveals the religious character of the home of Jesus when he says, "And his parents went every year to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover." Joseph and Mary lived nearly one hundred miles from Jerusalem, the holy city, and, yet, every year, in order to obey the law of Moses (Exodus 23:14-17), they went to Jerusalem to observe the passover. When one reads



this simple statement of the evangelist and remembers what a journey of one hundred miles meant to these people, he may inhale the fragrance of genuine piety and breathe an atmosphere of religious faith, hope and love.

At the age of twelve the Jewish boy became "a son of the law" and incurred his first legal obligation. Luke tells what took place at a passover when Jesus was twelve years old. This particular passover, therefore, marked a definite epoch in Jesus' life. There are in the gospels no exaggerated accounts of such youthful exploits as may be found in the ordinary biographies of great men, but the record of this one incident will help the student to rightly interpret the whole life.

On the way to Jerusalem to attend religious feasts, pilgrims traveled in companies composed of groups of friends. When Jesus went up to Jerusalem in his twelfth year to attend this passover he probably traveled with a large company of friends from Nazareth and, when in Jerusalem, became separated from his parents and tarried behind when they started on their return to Nazareth. They did not discover that he was not with them until they had gone a day's journey homeward, when they sought him among their relatives and acquaintances and could not find him. In deep anxiety they returned to Jerusalem, and, on the third day, found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions, deeply interested in what was taking place around him, but forgetful of his parents. There is no record that Joseph gave any expression to either astonishment or anger, but the mother of Jesus said, "Son, why hast thou dealt thus with us? Behold thy father and I sought thee sorrowing?" To this Jesus replied, "How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" His mother had said to him "Thy

father and I," but, with an entirely different meaning, he said, "My Father's house," and the answer so deeply impressed his mother that she kept all these sayings in her heart.

What Joseph, the husband of Mary, thought of the conversation is not revealed, and at this point he drops out of the history. He probably died before the beginning of Jesus' public ministry.

This is the only incident in the first thirty years of Jesus' life that is mentioned by any of the evangelists. God usually keeps his servants away from the public gaze while he prepares them for their life work. Moses dwelt in the wilderness; David was amongst the sheep folds; Paul went into Arabia, and Jesus Christ dwelt at Nazareth. Luke's brief sketch of him is sufficient to convince us that Christ's childhood at Nazareth was entirely different from the childhood suggested by the paintings of Giotto and Fra Angelico, who represent him and his mother as sitting on gorgeous thrones, environed by the luxuries and splendors of an Oriental palace. He evidently lived in a very humble home at Nazareth, and his associations were with the poor, who earned their daily bread by their daily labours. It may be said with confidence that his home life was sweet, simple, contented, innocent, essentially beautiful and happy. There was an atmosphere of purity and piety that would make any child's life beautiful with the beauty of holy love. Jesus Christ in his childhood, as we see him in the light of this gospel, lived, looked and acted as other children, only without sin.

His humanity was as perfect as his divinity. His childhood was the childhood of one who waxed strong, was filled with wisdom and the grace of God was upon him. When a boy of twelve Jesus was thinking of his

heavenly Father and recognized a higher and holier claim than that which bound him to his earthly parents.

This incident in the temple throws light on a question that Christian scholars have not been able to answer satisfactorily; that is the question as to the relation of the human to the divine in the Christ. It is evident from this incident that the human was so related to the divine that there could be growth or gradual apprehension of the divinity by the humanity. The little child at Bethlehem was the divine Son of God, but he was also the perfect Son of man in such a sense that he could and did ask questions of human teachers at home and in the temple. He was so essentially human that he could grow strong and be filled with wisdom, yet he knew at the age of twelve, that he was the Son of God. The consciousness that he was the divine Son of God did not come to him suddenly, when he was about thirty years old, or at his baptism, but was recognized when he dwelt in his home at Nazareth.

## IV

### LIFE AT NAZARETH

Luke 2:51-52. "And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and favour with God and man."

(Luke 2: 51-52.)

**F**ROM the passover at Jerusalem Jesus went to Nazareth, was subject to his parents and advanced in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man. This statement contains all the reliable information in existence with reference to the next eighteen years of the life of Jesus. We can scarcely refrain from attempting to lift the veil and follow him in our imagination as he goes with his parents from the Holy City to the little Nazareth. He had come in contact with, and had been influenced by some of the great teachers who had devoted their lives to a study of the sacred scriptures of the Hebrews. He would never be exactly what he had been before this passover experience. On his homeward journey, he probably passed Kirjath Jearim, and would be reminded of Joshua's victory in the valley of Ajalon; passing Bethel, he would be told of Jacob's vision; Sychem, Mount Carmel and the Valley of Jezreel would recall the brave deeds of many servants of God who had lived and died in past ages.

It is not possible to lift the veil and see any particular incident in the life of Jesus while he dwelt at Nazareth during the next eighteen years, for there is not a single

authentic anecdote recorded anywhere. Nazareth was a little village, situated about midway in a range of hills stretching from the southern end of the Sea of Galilee westward to the Mediterranean Sea. These hills, in the neighborhood of Nazareth, rise to the height of about five hundred feet, and from their summit there is a good view of the Valley of Jezreel as it stretches southward, while, looking westward, one may see the waters of the Mediterranean. There are no remains of the ancient Nazareth that can now be identified. Dr. Thompson, in "The Land and the Book," says, "It is nearly certain that every stone of the small hamlet where the Saviour of the world spent so many years has long ago crumbled to dust and mingled with the soil of the hills from which it was originally quarried. The rock disintegrates with great rapidity and, as the place was often almost or quite destroyed and forsaken, the soft stones thus exposed would soon disappear." He adds, "I feel assured that the Church of the Annunciation, the cave, the kitchen of Mary, the workshop of Joseph, the dining table of our Lord and his Apostles, the Synagogue where he read the prophet Isaiah, and the precipice down which the enraged villagers were determined to cast him headlong, as now shown to the pilgrim and the tourist, are all apocryphal and have no claim to veneration or even respect. The eye rests on nothing with which our Lord was familiar, except the natural features of the place and the surrounding hills."

There might be some inspiration for the Christian tourist in the thought that he was really drinking from the same fountain from which Jesus drank many times. It might strengthen our faith and sweeten our communion with him if we could climb to the summits of the hills of Nazareth, and breathe the pure, cool air, while looking over hills and valleys to the distant sea, as no doubt he



often did. However, the same sun, moon and stars that he saw day and night during all the years of his mortal life may be seen now, and any one may have direct communion with him in his own home without making a pilgrimage to Nazareth.

Mark does not give any sketch of the life of Jesus before the beginning of his public ministry, but he does tell of a visit Jesus made to his own country during his public ministry, and says that, during this visit, the people of Nazareth were astonished by his miracles and by his teachings in the synagogue, and that they said one to another, "Is not this the carpenter?" It was a question that needed no answer. They had known Jesus as the carpenter, the son of Mary. His life amongst them had not led them to believe that he was more than the carpenter. This question, asked at Nazareth after Jesus had entered upon his public ministry, puts the stamp of condemnation on all the apocryphal stories concerning the miracles of his boyhood and youth. They knew him as a carpenter and the son of a carpenter.

What a world of meaning is contained in that one question, "Is not this the carpenter?" During his public ministry Jesus went everywhere preaching the Kingdom and he associated with the humble and the poor of this world. He could say of himself, "The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." He was identified with the common people; but, if we were to look for his highest and most convincing testimony to the dignity of honest, faithful labour, we would find it in the fact that Jesus Christ was known as a carpenter. There has always been a tendency to regard honest toil, and especially manual labour, as degrading. There is an insidious and quite prevalent delusion that it is a nobler thing for a man to live without

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working than it is for a man to be a laborer; that the man or woman who controls and consumes a great deal is superior to the man or woman who earns or produces what others control and consume. On this delusion God placed the stamp of infinite and eternal condemnation when he sent his Son to be a carpenter. Had Jesus lived in ease, idleness and luxury until he entered on his public ministry, he could never have come so near to the millions of weary toilers who constitute a large part of mankind in every generation. The home of Jesus at Nazareth was such a home as is possible for ordinary men and women. It was not beautified and adorned by costly furnishings; its table was not spread with luxuries that are possible only to the rich. In that home of the carpenter there was reverence for parents; there was gentleness, kindness, purity, industry, contentment; in the heart of Jesus, as he dwelt in that home, there was no covetousness nor greed of gain, no vaulting ambition, no envy nor jealousy, no hatred nor malice; there was perfect love Godward and manward. God's home is with the humble. His Son dwelt in a humble home in Nazareth, and the Comforter, eternal Love, is to be found now in the humblest homes more frequently than in the abodes of luxury.

Jesus did not have what the Jews called a liberal education. If he had attended a theological seminary or school of the prophets; or, if he had been brought up at the feet of a great teacher like Gamaliel or Shammai, there would have been no room for the question, "How knoweth this man letters having never learned?" The whole story of his education is told by Luke when he says that he was subject to his parents, and that he advanced in wisdom, in stature, and in favour with God and man.

There is a flood of light in the statement that Jesus was subject to his parents after his experience at Jerusalem.

He had said to his mother in the temple, "Wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" He had recognized his high nature and great mission, yet for eighteen years he dwelt and wrought in the little, humble home at Nazareth, being subject to his parents. It required these eighteen years to prepare his humanity for his great mission as the divine Son of God. In his perfect manhood he needed to cultivate patience, humility and meekness during these years, that he might be able to say, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart!"

When Moses was raised up to be the deliverer of God's people he seemed and felt ready for his work at the age of forty, but God spent forty more years in changing the rash, impetuous Moses into the meek, long-suffering Moses by keeping him a shepherd in the wilderness. Jesus, at the age of twelve, recognized his mission as the Son of God and Son of man, but the heavenly Father left him for eighteen years in the home at Nazareth, subject to his parents, that he might grow in wisdom, in stature and in favour with God and men. It was eighteen years of preparation for three years' work. This was God's way.

These years spent in the home of Joseph and Mary were spent also in communion with the heavenly Father. When he went from his Father's house in Jerusalem to resume the home life at Nazareth he did not leave his heavenly Father at Jerusalem. It was his custom to worship in the synagogue and he communed with God in the silence and solitude at Nazareth, forming there the habit that afterwards led him to spend whole nights in prayer. The inspired writers are silent concerning these eighteen years of our Lord's life, but their silence is eloquent and luminous, leaving each one to fill out the picture for himself.

## V

### JOHN THE BAPTIST

Luke 1:80. "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the desert till the day of his showing unto Israel."

(Mat. 3:1-12; Mark 1:1-8; Luke 3:1-18; John 1:15-31.)

**W**HILE Jesus grew to manhood and was prepared for his Messianic work at Nazareth, another child, the son of Zacharias, grew to manhood in the desert and was disciplined for the great work that he was to do as the herald and forerunner of the Christ. John was six months older than Jesus, and, in view of the sacred and profound sympathy that united Mary and Elizabeth, it might be expected that the two youths would know a great deal of each other. On this point there is no reliable information. If the inspired historians have but little to say of the boyhood of Jesus Christ, they have still less to say of the boyhood of John the Baptist. Of the four evangelists, only Luke gives any information, and he condenses the whole history of thirty years into a single sentence, as he says, "The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the desert until the day of his showing unto Israel." The same evangelist had recorded the words of the angel to Zacharias at the time when he revealed to him that he should have a son and added "Thou shalt call his name John. . . . and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb."

This is the whole record of the early life of John, and it suggests that while there was a strong bond of union between the mother of Jesus and the mother of John, and, though John was to be the last and greatest herald of the Christ, the two were not intimately associated in their youth and early manhood. John probably did not know Jesus as the promised Messiah. Zacharias had been told that his son should go in the spirit of Elijah, that he should turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and prepare the way of the Lord; the mother of John, when filled with the Holy Spirit, had said to Mary, the mother of Jesus, "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come unto me?" The parents of John would not fail to tell him of the vision preceding his birth, and he would be impressed with the thought that he was to be the herald that should prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah. He knew that he was to be "the prophet of the Most High," and that Jesus of Nazareth, his kinsman, was greater than he. This is the probable explanation of the fact afterwards recorded that John received a sign from heaven by which he recognized Jesus as the Christ. He knew him as Jesus of Nazareth his kinsman, but he probably did not know him as the Christ of God, and the Saviour of the world.

The thirty years spent in preparing Jesus and his forerunner for their life-work were eventful years in Jewish history. The kingdom, that had been united under Herod the Great, was dismembered after his death, Archelaus becoming tetrarch of Judea. Herod Antipas tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, and Philip tetrarch of Trachonitis, Gaulonitis, Batanea and Paneas. Archelaus was afterwards deposed, and his dominions passed under the di-



rect power of Rome, being annexed to Syria and governed by a procurator. The office of high priest had become political rather than religious. Josephus says that there were twenty-eight high priests from the time of Herod until the burning of the temple.

As the outcome of all these changes, Pontius Pilate was procurator of Judea, while Annas, and Caiaphas, his son-in-law, were high priests when John the Baptist entered upon his mission as the herald of the Christ. It was "the fullness of time," even as it had been in the days of Noah and of Lot. The cup of iniquity was full to overflowing. Truth, purity, piety and righteousness seemed about to sink and perish in a deluge of atheism and sensuality. The Roman government was godless, cruel and corrupt. Might was the only clearly recognized right. The Jewish people, with rare exceptions, were formalists and sensualists. Pharisaic pride and Sadducean sensuality were in possession of the high places. The time seemed to have come when God must either smite the earth with a curse or send the promised Elijah. There was need of one with the stern courage of the old prophet who faced and conquered the prophets of Baal and Ashtoreth on Mount Carmel.

John, the son of Zacharias, was the man whom God had raised up and equipped for this great and hard work. He had been trained as an ascetic; he could endure hardships without complaining; he could come down from the higher to a lower place without envying, and could face danger without fear. In fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah, he appeared suddenly as a crier in the wilderness, and his cry was,

"Make ye ready the way of the Lord  
Make his paths straight,"

John was not clothed in soft raiment, nor was he a reed shaken by every passing wind. With raiment of camel's hair, with a leathern girdle about his loins, having for food locust and wild honey, his voice broke the silence in the wilderness of Judea, as he cried, "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." His preaching created intense and wide spread interest. Multitudes from Jerusalem, Judea and all the region round about the Jordan came to see and hear the strange, weird preacher, and many were baptized of him, confessing their sins. He discerned the times. He saw the wickedness that was concealed under professions of piety, and, like the Elijah, who had met and challenged King Ahab, he sternly rebuked the haughty, heartless, hypocritical, self righteous Pharisees and the sensual Sadducees who came to his baptism, saying, "Ye offspring of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore, fruit worthy of repentance, and think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father .....even now the axe is laid unto the root of the tree; every tree, therefore, that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire."

John was as faithful to his mission as he was fearless. When the Jews sent priests and Levites to inquire whether he were the Christ, he declared that he was not. He declared, too, that he was not the Elijah of the Old Testament, nor the promised prophet, but that he was merely the forerunner, "the voice of one crying in the wilderness," that had been predicted by Isaiah. He declared that he was not worthy to unloose the shoe latchet of the One who should come after him. He did not for a moment assume to be the One who should sit as a refiner and purifier of the sons of Levi (Mal. 3:1-4). He said, "I baptize you with water unto repentance, but he

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that cometh after me.....shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." (Matthew 3: 11-12.)

Had he been vain or corruptible, he would have fallen. He was recognized as a great and popular preacher. Men were willing to accept him at his own valuation. By baptizing and introducing Jesus he was putting aside his own opportunities to take the first place. His honours had come unsought. Might he not for a little time enjoy the reputation of being the promised Messiah? He was involving himself in trouble by denying that he was the Christ; for the Jewish rulers were saying, "What authority do you have for baptizing if you are not the Christ?" To introduce the Christ, he knew, was to eclipse his own light; but he was faithful, and he declared that he was only the herald and the witness of the true Light.

## VI

### THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

Mark 1:9. "And it came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth and was baptized of John in the Jordan."

(Mat. 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:32-34.)

**T**HE fame of John the Baptist had reached its zenith. The Jordan, where he was preaching had become a greater center of religious interest and attraction than the temple at Jerusalem where robed priests, with splendid ritual, offered daily sacrifices. The great preacher, with the tremendous emphasis of accumulated zeal, warned all sinners of every class to repent. He demanded justice, purity and mercy. He fearlessly rebuked rulers and priests as well as the common people. There was no effort to conceal unwelcome truth by smooth speech, and there was no attempt to flatter any man whether rich or poor. To the inquiring soldiers, who came to him, he said, "Do no violence, neither exact anything wrongfully"; to the tax gatherers, he said, "Extort no more than is appointed you; to those who had more worldly goods than they needed, he said, "Impart to him that hath none"; and to Herod, who had married his brother's wife while his brother was yet living, he said, "It is not lawful for thee to have her."

There is something in every man that compels him to respect the fearless, earnest preacher of righteousness, John was such a preacher, and by his preaching had enlisted the sympathy of those who heard him, so that he

stood preëminent and secure as a religious teacher when Jesus of Nazareth appeared and asked to be baptized.

The incidents connected with the baptism of Jesus indicate that John knew him as Jesus, his relative. When the request for baptism was first made he said, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" Jesus overruled his objection by saying, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." When Jesus was baptized the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, descended from heaven and rested upon him, and there came a voice from heaven saying, "Thou art my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

This was the sign that had been given to John by which he should recognize the Christ, for he says, "I knew him not but he that sent me to baptize with water, he said unto me, upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending and abiding, the same is he that baptizeth with the Holy Spirit. And I have seen and borne witness that this is the Son of God."

John's baptism was ordinarily a baptism unto repentance and a badge of discipleship. His baptizing of Jesus was a unique event. Luke tells us that it took place when all the people were baptized and that Jesus was praying when the Holy Spirit descended upon him and a voice came from heaven. It was a formal consecration to his great work as the only Mediator between God and man. John's preaching and teaching in the wilderness were undertaken and maintained in order that they might lead up to this event, and that Jesus Christ might be manifested to Israel as the Messiah.

This event marked a new epoch in the history of redemption. John the Baptist had faithfully performed his mission as the herald of the Christ, and he can now decrease that another may increase. He has introduced his



Lord, and can retire from the high place he has held as a preacher of righteousness and a prophet of God; henceforth he can rebuke sin and bring upon himself the wrath of sinners, but his great mission has been accomplished.

As we trace the life of Jesus we shall again have occasion to speak of John, but this seems a fitting time to catch a glimpse of the last days of this faithful servant of God.

Some time after this, John was arrested by Herod Antipas, and was imprisoned at Machaeris, on the eastern coast of the Dead Sea. His arrest was probably at the instigation of Herodias, and it is probable that John would have been murdered forthwith if Herod had not feared the people who regarded John as a prophet. Herod would never have killed John if he had been left to himself, for there was something in John's character and preaching that aroused Herod's conscience. But, like King Ahab, with whom the Elijah of the Old Testament came in conflict, Herod was allied with a notoriously wicked woman. It usually requires the combined effort of a good man and a good woman to do the greatest and best things; and it is true also that the worst acts that blacken the pages of human history have been the acts of weak, cowardly, bad men, controlled by strong, conscienceless, wicked women. A man and a woman can be more cruel and more desperately wicked than either a man or woman seems capable of being when acting alone.

John the Baptist, by his righteous rebuke of Herod's sin, had incurred the deadly enmity of a wicked woman, and God permitted her to have her revenge. John's work on earth was done, and his rest and reward were prepared by the heavenly Father, and this woman had her revenge; but, in letters of eternal infamy, by the side of Jezebel, she wrote the name Herodias.

## VII

### THE TEMPTATION

Matthew 4: 1. "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil."

(Mat. 4: 1-11; Mark 1: 12-13; Luke 4: 1-13.)

**G**OD'S first promise to sinful man proclaimed enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. In Eden Satan enslaved the first Adam, laying the foundation for his own kingdom in the spirit of unbelief, disobedience and enmity against God that he injected into the parents of mankind. Jesus came as the second Adam to bruise the serpent's head, to destroy the power of Satan, to cast out the usurping prince of this world and to overthrow his kingdom. Jesus' whole life was preëminently a conflict with the prince of this world, and this conflict is most clearly revealed in the inspired history of the beginning and the end of his public ministry. At the beginning of his life work, he successfully resisted Satan, and, at its close, he said, "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out, and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself."

Three evangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke, give accounts of Jesus' being led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, and they all represent the event as occurring immediately after his baptism. After telling of his baptism Matthew says, "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil";

Mark says, "and straightway the Spirit driveth him forth into the wilderness, and he was in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan"; and Luke writes, "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness during forty days, being tempted of the devil." No intelligent, honest student and believer of these Scriptures can doubt that Jesus Christ met a personal evil spirit called Satan or the devil in his temptation in the wilderness. His temptation did not come from suggestions of human enemies, nor did it spring up in his own pure mind. Like the temptation in Eden, it came from without, from Satan.

The sketch given by Mark is very brief. He only says that Jesus was in the wilderness forty days, that he was with the wild beasts, and that the angels ministered unto him. The accounts of the temptation given by Matthew and Luke differ in the order of the second and third temptations, and it is most probable that Matthew gives them in the order in which they actually occurred. Combining the three accounts, it is evident that the temptations were preceded by forty days and nights of fasting, during which time Jesus took no food and after which he hungered.

On Mount Sinai Moses neither ate bread nor drank water for forty days (Ex. 34:28), Elijah, on his way to Horeb, went forty days and forty nights without eating or drinking (1 Kings 19:8), and Jesus fasted forty days in the wilderness.

Tradition has fixed the scene of the temptation at a mountain near Jericho, but it may be questioned whether he spent the entire forty days preceding the temptation in one place. The essential, revealed facts are that he was led, or driven by the Spirit into the wilderness, and that he was hungry when the tempter came.

Nothing is added to the essential reality of the temptation by assuming that there was any visible, tangible presence of the evil one. The source of information in regard to this event is Jesus himself, or the Spirit of inspiration, and his recognition of the presence of the prince of this world was never dependent on any external or material manifestation.

The first temptation appealed to his human hunger, but suggested an interest in his claim to be divine. The tempter said, "If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." This was a very subtle temptation. God had fed the hungry Israelites in the wilderness; he had sent the raven to the prophet Elijah, and why should not the Son of God satisfy his human hunger by an exercise of his divine power? Why should he not command these stones to become bread and remove the words, "If thou art the Son of God," from the tempter's suggestion?

Only the purest and most profound spiritual insight could have seen any evil in this insidious temptation. It seemed to be only a call to Christ's perfect divinity to minister to the necessity of his perfect humanity. Only in the light of his own answer and subsequent history can any one confidently affirm that it would have been wrong for Jesus to have used his divine power to change those stones to bread. Nevertheless, it would have taken something from his perfect manhood; it would have left him incapable of being "tempted in all points as we are, yet, without sin"; it would have marred his perfection as our merciful and faithful high priest, and would have encouraged men to make the higher and the spiritual the servant of the lower and the sensual. He had become a real man by taking a true body and reasonable soul in order to redeem men, and he could not use his divine

power in the support of his humanity. To have done so would have involved the giving up of his great mission. Instead of doing so, he met the tempter's suggestion by saying, "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." In the light of this answer one may see that men are not to set aside divine law in order to satisfy sensual needs. His actions and words were in most striking contrast with the words and acts of tired, hungry, reckless Esau, who, for one mess of meat, sold his birthright. Though he had divine power, he humbled himself and suffered hunger with the children of God until God's time should come and he would relieve that hunger (Deut. 8:3).

The first temptation having failed, Satan took Jesus from the desert to the holy city, Jerusalem, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying, "If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down; for it is written,

"He shall give his angels charge concerning thee,  
And on their hands shall they bear thee up  
Lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone."

Avoiding all curious and unprofitable inquiries as to whether there was a real transfer of Jesus' material body from the wilderness to the temple in Jerusalem, we see Jesus on a pinnacle of the temple at a giddy height, tempted with the suggestion that he cast himself down. The temptation seemed to be addressed to spiritual pride, or spiritual vanity—to that in man which would lead him to use his spiritual power for selfish gratification. The subtlety of this temptation is evident when one considers Jesus' answer to the first temptation. In that answer Jesus had declared that perfect obedience and perfect trust in God were essential to real life. The tempter now



appeals to this trust in God's word, saying, "Cast thyself down, for it is written that his angels will bear thee up."

This temptation had an odor of sanctity. It seemed like an opportunity to prove God's faithfulness to his promises, as well as an opportunity to exhibit great faith and unlimited trust. Many good men have fallen before such temptations. They failed to see the essential distinction between humble, obedient faith, that trusts God in the darkest hour, and spiritual pride that would rush into danger and temptation in order to test God's faithfulness and gain a reputation for extraordinary sanctity. Extremes often meet. Humility and spiritual pride may appear in the same garb. Through the holes in the rags, donned by spurious humility, pride very frequently shows itself.

This temptation was a real and crucial test of Christ's claim to live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. The tempter said, "It is written," but Jesus answered, "Again it is written, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." The Scripture quoted by the tempter was true, but it was misapplied, and, by other Scriptures, Jesus exposed the misapplication. Had Jesus been seeking his own glory, as a man, when he chose to suffer hunger rather than command stones to become bread, he would have fallen before this second temptation that appealed to spiritual pride. In his perfect manhood Jesus took the form of a servant combining perfect obedience with humble, absolute trust. He did not need to test God's promises and would not tempt God.

Humility and spiritual pride are essentially different. Humility would go God's way; but spiritual pride would have God go our way. During the dark days of our Civil War a man said to President Lincoln, "I hope the Lord is on our side." Mr. Lincoln replied, "I am not so

much concerned about that as I am about something else." When the man asked what else could be so important, Mr. Lincoln answered, "I hope we are on the Lord's side." There is a difference as well as a distinction.

In the first two temptations the tempter was disguised as a pious friend, giving kindly and helpful advice. But the sword of the Spirit has revealed his real character, and now he throws off the mask and makes an appeal to human ambition. Taking Jesus up into "an exceeding high mountain," and showing him all the kingdoms of the world and all their glory in a moment of time, he said, "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me."

With the natural eye Jesus could not have seen all the kingdoms of the world and all their glory from any mountain on the globe. The appeal was made to human ambition, and before his clear mind were placed all the pomp and power of world-wide authority. If he would become the servant of the world and worship the prince of this world, he could have the world's highest place. The tempter boldly claimed all authority in this world and the power to dispose of it as he would. He said, "it hath been delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it." Jesus did not dispute this claim, but, with infinite scorn, he rejected the offer, saying, "Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." In this answer Jesus proclaims the prince of this world a usurper whom he will not accept as his sovereign. There can be no compromise, and the one or the other must be destroyed. This was the beginning, and a miniature type of that contest that reached its climax on Calvary. The temptation was a temptation to live a life of selfish ambition, but Jesus Christ chose the life of self-sacrificing devotion to God

in the saving of men. There can henceforth be no misunderstanding, but there will be mortal conflict.

The inspired records of the temptation of Jesus suggest many questions that cannot be definitely answered, but they also teach us very clearly two or three great lessons. First of all they teach that Jesus Christ lived his life here as a real and perfect man, and that he met temptation as a man. Second, they teach just as clearly that he had to contend, not only with wicked men, but with a personal spirit of evil, who claimed authority over this world, and was recognized as the prince of this world. Third, they showed that he gained his victory, not by taking refuge in his essential divinity, but by using the Word of God as the sword of the Spirit. When he had met and resisted temptation, when he had conquered sensual desire, spiritual pride, and selfish ambition, by using the sword of the Spirit, angels came and ministered unto him.

## VIII

### CHRIST'S FIRST DISCIPLE

John 1 : 38. "What seek ye?"

(John 1 : 35-51.)

**T**HE first three gospel narratives contain no record of Jesus' movements during the time that intervened between his temptation and his return to Galilee. Matthew and Mark follow their accounts of the temptation by saying, "after John the Baptist had been imprisoned, Jesus returned to Galilee." John gives a full, consecutive and very interesting sketch of Jesus' return from the wilderness to Bethany, where John was teaching and baptizing, and of his choosing his first five disciples. He specifies what occurred on four consecutive days. The first of these four days was probably the day of Jesus' return from the wilderness. That was a great day in the history of John the Baptist and marked the beginning of the decline of his faithful ministry. A deputation of priests and Levites from the sanhedrin at Jerusalem had come to interview him, and to bring back a report concerning him. They were the chosen representatives of the highest Jewish ecclesiastical court; and, if they had been favourably impressed, John might have been invited to Jerusalem. Had he been seeking his own glory, the coming of this influential committee would have afforded a rare opportunity to make a favourable impression, but he did not discard his coarse cloak and his leathern girdle, and his answers to their questions did not

seem to worldly wisdom either tactful or diplomatic. When they said, "Who art thou?" he confessed that he was not the Christ, that he was not Elijah, and that he was not the looked for prophet. When they inquired still farther, saying that they wished to give an answer to those who had sent them, he replied, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Make straight the way of the Lord." When they asked why he baptized if he was neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the prophet, he answered, "I baptize with water; in the midst of you standeth one, whom ye know not, even he that cometh after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose."

From this answer of the Baptist it may be inferred that Jesus had returned from the scene of his temptation and that John actually saw him as he addressed the deputation from Jerusalem.

The next day John saw Jesus coming unto him and said, "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, after me cometh a man that is become before me." John then went on to say to the multitude that he had come to know that Jesus was indeed the Christ by seeing the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove descending and resting upon him.

How far John understood the profound meaning of his own words when he described Jesus as "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world," we need not stop to inquire. These were the words of one who had been filled with the Spirit of God in order that he might be a true herald and forerunner of the Christ. To all believers of the sacred Scriptures these are the words that really describe Jesus Christ and his mission. When one reads them he may think of the lamb of the morning and evening sacrifice, or he may think of the paschal lamb,



or he may think of the lamb spoken of in the 53d chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah, or he may think of all these. This is the description of Jesus Christ as he is presented to the multitude at the beginning of his life work.

On the day following the Baptist was standing with two of his disciples, Andrew and John, and, looking on Jesus as he walked, he said, again, to the two disciples, "Behold the Lamb of God." These two disciples of John had probably heard what the Baptist had said on the preceding day, and they promptly followed Jesus. Jesus turned and, seeing them following him, said, "What seek ye?"

This question contained the first words of Christ's public ministry. In the original the question comprises only two words. The time, the place, the circumstances in which they occurred render them profoundly suggestive and important. The two disciples who heard John the Baptist say "Behold the Lamb of God" were seized by some irresistible impulse and at once, without taking time to explain or apologize, left the old, tried friend and teacher, and followed a new leader. What motive prompted them to take such a step? Why did they leave the Baptist and follow Jesus? Jesus asked them a very reasonable and pertinent question when he said "What seek ye?" It was equivalent to saying "why are you leaving your former master? What motive prompts you to leave him and follow me?" The two disciples could only reply, "Rabbi where abidest thou?" They had not analyzed their own motives, and could not explain their action. To their question Jesus only replied, "Come and ye shall see." In their question he saw more than morbid or idle curiosity and he welcomed them to his fellowship. It was about four o'clock, and they came and abode with him that day. What they heard and what they saw this first

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day spent with Jesus is not recorded, but they saw and heard and felt what bound them to him as disciples ever afterwards.

This brief sketch of the calling of the first two disciples manifests the self denying spirit of John the Baptist. He was willing to decrease that Jesus might increase. It reveals, at the same time, the tender regard that Christ had for the timid ones who came to him conscious only that they needed him and that they wished to know more of him. These two disciples had only the crudest and vaguest conception of what they were really doing and Jesus asked them a most searching question. It was the sword of the Spirit discerning the thoughts and intents of their hearts, yet, when they could only give a very vague answer, Jesus did not reject them.

Andrew went, either that night or early the next morning, and found his brother Simon and brought him to Jesus. His own brother was his first thought, for the inspired record reads, "He findeth first his own brother Simon, and saith to him, we have found the Christ." In this event Andrew displayed a little of the enthusiasm and impetuosity of his more illustrious brother, and, though Andrew did not attain to the highest place among the apostles, he was the means of converting his brother who did become a recognized leader.

When Andrew brought Simon to Jesus, Jesus looked on him and said, "Thou art Simon the son of John; thou shalt be called Cephas," which means a stone.

It is remarkable that Simon Peter, who, as an apostle, always seemed willing to talk, should be entirely silent and passive in the great event that made him a disciple.

The next day Jesus was minded to go forth into Galilee, and, either before he started, or as he was going on the journey, he found Philip, and said unto him, "Follow

me." Philip's home was in Bethsaida, but, like John and Andrew and Peter, he had probably come to the Jordan to hear the preaching of John the Baptist. Philip obeyed the Master's command and became a disciple. The record of the calling of this disciple indicates that Jesus had been looking for him, and nothing is said of Philip's seeking Jesus. But Philip had a friend named Nathanael, and his first thought was of this friend, and when he had found him he said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth the son of Joseph."

From this statement we readily infer that Philip and Nathanael had often talked of, and were looking for him of whom Moses and the prophets had written. They had heard the preaching of John the Baptist and were looking for the Christ. But Nathanael lived in Cana near Nazareth, and was prejudiced against whatsoever came from so unimportant a place. He did not think it possible that the little village of Nazareth so near his own home, could be the home of the Messiah; and he said to Philip, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip did not argue the question, but said in reply, "Come and see."

When Nathanael came to Jesus his prejudice quickly vanished, for Jesus, seeing him, said, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." Then, to Nathanael's astonished inquiry, "Whence knowest thou me?" Jesus answered, "Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." What had taken place under that fig tree, what secret of Nathanael's life Jesus touched, was known only to Jesus and Nathanael. The answer of Jesus astonished and overwhelmed Nathanael and he exclaimed, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel." To this confession Jesus

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simply answered, "Because I said unto thee, I saw thee underneath the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these."

This very brief sketch of the choosing of the first five disciples is both suggestive and instructive. Andrew and John, having seen Jesus when he was pointed out as the "Lamb of God," followed him and became his disciples. Peter was brought to Jesus by his brother Andrew, who declared, "we have found the Messiah." Jesus found Philip, and Philip at once sought and found his friend Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses and the prophets did write." The entire record indicates what discipleship really means and how men may become true disciples. The method is adapted to each individual case, but the transaction is not completed in any case until the disciple has come into direct contact with the Master and has accepted him as the Messiah.

## IX

### A MARRIAGE FEAST AND THE FIRST MIRACLE

John 2: 11. "This beginning of his signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed on him."

(John 2: 1-11.)

**A**FTER relating the conversion of Nathanael, the evangelist gives an account of a marriage feast in Cana of Galilee where Jesus performed his first miracle. He says that this marriage occurred on the third day, and that the mother of Jesus was there; that Jesus also was bidden with his disciples. There is doubt as to the exact time from which the third day should be reckoned, though it seems to be most consistent with what is known of the place and the circumstances to reckon from the day when Jesus left the place where John was baptizing. The distance to Cana was not less than eighty miles, and it would require nearly three days for Jesus and his disciples to make the journey. The exact location of Cana is doubtful, but there is no doubt as to the fact that it was only a few miles northeast of Nazareth, that it was a small village on higher ground than Caparnum, and that it was the home of Nathanael.

The mother of Jesus was, not only a guest at this marriage, but seemed to have had an important and responsible part in managing the wedding feast. Jesus and his disciples were amongst the invited guests; but the record seems to indicate that the disciples were invited because



they were disciples, though Nathanael, whose home was in Cana, was, no doubt, a friend of the family. It is not improbable that the time of Jesus' return from Judea may have been determined in part by this marriage, and that the men who had become his disciples within the last fortnight had not been expected at the wedding.

Whether the wedding feast lasted two days or seven days depended upon the ability of the family to meet the expenses. During this wedding feast the wine ran short. This would have been a source of mortification at any marriage, and was peculiarly distressing to the family at an oriental wedding. It so distressed the mother of Jesus that she came to him saying, "They have no wine." She may have cherished a vague hope that he could, in some way, relieve the distress. There seemed to be nothing in Mary's words that meant more than an expression of distress, but Jesus saw more, and said in reply, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." There is no element of harshness in this answer, for the original word that is translated "woman," is respectful and tender. Nevertheless, he did not say, "Mother," but "woman," and, when he adds, "mine hour is not yet come," he very clearly indicated that he recognized a higher authority, and that he must wait for his heavenly Father.

There was something in Jesus' answer that led Mary to believe that her Son's hour was near, if it had not yet come, and she directed the servants to do whatsoever he commanded them. For thirty years she had pondered in her heart the many wonderful events connected with the birth of her dearly beloved Son, and now she seemed impressed with the thought that he was about to begin a career that would reveal his high mission, though it was to end in the piercing of her own soul.

According to the custom of the Jews on such occasions, six stone water pots were standing there, having a capacity of not less than one hundred and twenty-five gallons. Christ bade the servants fill them with water and, when they had been filled, he said, "Draw out now and bear unto the ruler of the feast." The servants obeyed, and the ruler of the feast, when he had tasted the water that had become wine, not knowing whence it came, called the bridegroom and said to him, "Every man setteth on first the good wine, and when men have drunk freely, then that which is worse; but thou has kept the good wine until now."

The evangelist John says that this was Christ's first miracle or sign, and the same writer tells us that John the Baptist performed no miracles. It seems befitting, therefore, that we should pause for a moment and study this new epoch in Christ's history, this beginning of signs. What was there in it that made it essentially different from any of the acts of John the Baptist, or from any of the acts of Jesus up to this time? Why is it called a sign or a miracle? Wherein did it differ from the ordinary acts of other men?

It differed essentially in this, that there was here the result of the exercise of a supernatural power. Water became wine. If one thinks of it only as marvelous, he may call it a miracle; if he thinks of it as indicating the presence of a supernatural being or power, he may call it a sign. The evangelist calls it a sign, though in King James' translation it is called a miracle. The name is not important. The really important matter is that there was present a supernatural power, for there was an effect that had no adequate natural cause.

In his temptation in the wilderness, Jesus had refused to exercise his divine power. He would not command

stones to become bread in order to satisfy his own hunger. Why does he now, at this marriage feast, and afterwards, exercise his divine power?

The first answer to this question is that he performed miracles as his credentials, proving to men that he was the representative of God. A miracle, or the exercise of supernatural power, is ordinarily most improbable, and one should not believe in a miracle on the same evidence that would convince him of an ordinary or natural event. Every possible effort to explain any event by natural causes should precede the belief that it is the result of supernatural causes. It is antecedently improbable that the all wise Creator should have so constructed his universe that it would require his direct interference to secure the outworking of his eternal purposes. As an intelligent Being, the Creator can work through his own laws, and he does not need to interfere with them; therefore, miracles, or supernatural signs, are ordinarily most improbable. On the other hand, if the Creator wishes at any time to send a message to his intelligent creature, it is most reasonable that he should give his messenger supernatural power as a credential or sign or proof of his commission and authority to speak for his Creator. When Moses was about to go to his brethren in Egypt he felt the need of such credentials, and God gave him the power to work miracles or show signs. Elijah on Carmel was clothed with divine power. The prophets foretold that the Christ should open blind eyes, unstop deaf ears, make the lame to walk and perform supernatural works; and Christ appealed to men to believe on him for his works sake. If one now professes to have authority from God to reveal some new truth or impose some new duty he should not expect men to believe if he failed to work the works of God. On the other hand, if any one in this age

could show, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that he was clothed with supernatural power, men could not refuse to accept his message. Jesus performed miracles as credentials, and could say, "If I had not done among them the works which none other did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father" (John 15:24).

Nevertheless, Jesus' works were more than mere signs and wonders. He would not cast himself down from a pinnacle of the temple where a great multitude might see and wonder, and he would not give to those who sought it a sign from heaven. His works were signs that indicated the character and purpose of his mission. He healed diseases, cast out devils and raised the dead. He helped and saved men.

This first supernatural work of Christ seems well adapted to arrest attention and suggest questions. He had refused to transmute stones into bread; he had refused to cast himself down from a pinnacle of the temple; why did he change water into wine at this marriage feast in the little town of Galilee?

In seeking to answer these questions, one can hardly fail to be impressed by the fact that the miracle was performed at a marriage feast. Jesus did not enter into the marriage relation, and men might have inferred that perfect manhood was not possible in the marriage relation. His presence and his part in this marriage, therefore, exalt and honour this venerable and divine institution. It indicates God's interest in the establishment of a new home, where husband and wife become one in mutual love and by the ordinance of God. After the banishment from Eden, no other event has done so much to exalt, purify and honour the institution of marriage as this first miracle of Jesus at a marriage feast. It assures all men



that this holy and happy relation has Christ's approval and blessing, and that he is interested in the rejoicings of a marriage feast.

The miracle itself is significant. The enjoyment of the young people who had been united in marriage was about to give place to intense mortification that would have marred their happiness in coming years, and, in order to prevent this, Jesus exercised his supernatural power. Had it been the marriage of the king's son, it would not have seemed so remarkable, but it was only the marriage of two Galilean peasants. Is it a small matter that the Saviour of the world should manifest so deep an interest in the happiness of this young husband and wife so unknown to fortune and to fame? Does not the fact that their names were not given teach that Jesus Christ has a like interest in every Christian marriage?

It is hardly necessary to remark that Christ's turning water into wine gives no encouragement to drunkenness any more than the fact that he attended a marriage feast would give sanction to lust and impurity. His turning water into wine was more than an accelerated natural process; it was a direct divine act, but it gives no sanction whatsoever to the abuse of wine, either by drunkards or by covetous drunkard-makers. As his first miracle it indicates the divine power and the loving, compassionate spirit of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; it indicates, at the same time, the loving kindness that prompted all his acts as the Son of man. The thought of this miracle has gladdened the hearts and purified the homes of men in all Christian ages. Moses performed his first miracle for the deliverance of God's people by turning Egypt's sacred river into blood. Jesus Christ began his work of deliverance from the bondage of sin by turning water into wine.



## X

### JESUS IN CAPERNAUM

John 2: 11-12. "This beginning of his signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed on him. After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples; and there they abode not many days."

(John 2: 12.)

**T**HERE was a striking contrast between the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus Christ and the first appearance of John the Baptist. When John began preaching repentance and preparing the way of the Lord he was not far from the Dead Sea. He seemed to be standing in the shadow of the rain of fire and brimstone that, in the days of Abraham and Lot, destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. He was in a wild, weird, melancholy desert. All his surroundings seemed to harmonize with his rough clothing and his leathern girdle, while the waters of the Jordan, as they were lost in the Dead Sea, seemed to emphasize his rugged eloquence. When Jesus Christ began his public ministry his environment was altogether different. Instead of being alone, and looking over the rugged hills in a Judean desert, he was surrounded by his friends at a wedding feast in a little village of Galilee. Having performed his first miracle at this marriage feast he went with his mother, his brethren and his disciples down to the beautiful city of

Capernaum, situated on the shore overlooking the clear, sparkling waters of the sea of Galilee.

We cannot in this day identify the site of Capernaum, but we know that, in Jesus' time, it was a prosperous and beautiful city; that it had elegant public buildings, including a synagogue erected by a Roman nobleman. The whole region of Gennesaret was, at that time, like the valley of the lower Jordan when it seemed to Abraham and Lot the very "garden of the Lord." Capernaum was probably the most beautiful city on the inland sea.

The synoptic writers give no hint that Jesus came to Capernaum until after John the Baptist had been imprisoned by Herod Antipas, but John gives an extended account of a visit to Jerusalem and the outlying districts of Judea before the arrest of the Baptist. In view of the evident fact that the evangelists do not relate events in their exact chronological order, it seems evident that Jesus made his first visit to Galilee before John was imprisoned; that he went to Capernaum immediately after the marriage at Cana; that he stayed in Capernaum a few days, and then, in company with friends, went to Jerusalem. This method of harmonizing the different narratives does no violence to any of the records, but it regards Matthew 4: 12-17 as a general statement covering the whole period.

Capernaum was the home of Andrew, Peter and John, three disciples who had been with Jesus at the marriage in Cana, and it is probable that they entertained him and his friends when they came to Capernaum after the marriage. This, however, is only a conjecture. Nazareth, the home of Jesus for the first thirty years of his life, was not more than fifteen or twenty miles from Capernaum, and it is probable that his family had other acquaintances and friends in the city. Nevertheless, the evangelists give

no indication that Jesus, up to this time, had ever been in what afterwards came to be known as "his own city."

During his brief visit Jesus performed no miracles and probably did not appear as a public teacher. His recent miracle at Cana and the reports brought by Andrew, John and Peter, with regard to the testimony they had heard from the lips of John the Baptist when he had proclaimed Jesus the "Lamb of God," would render him the center of interest and the topic of conversation. No opposition had developed. Jesus was with his friends in a city of palms, vines, oranges, figs, almonds and pomegranates, where Josephus says, that the seasons compete for the honor of possession and nature gathers all the elements of her strength. If Jesus had come into the world to do his own will he could have found many good reasons for staying in this beautiful city by the lake, whose very name, Gennesaret, means "Garden of Abundance," but he abode there "not many days."

## XI

### CHRIST'S FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT TO JERUSALEM

John 2: 13. "And the passover of the Jews was at hand and Jesus went up to Jerusalem."

(John 2: 13-22.)

**T**HE synoptic gospels are silent concerning our Lord's early ministry in Judea, and they do not tell of his presence at any feast of the passover after he was twelve years old except the last, when he was crucified. John, on the other hand, gives a brief, and connected account of Christ's early visit to Judea and tells of other visits to the feasts of the Jews during his public ministry. After saying that Jesus, with his mother and brethren and disciples, went from Cana to Capernaum, and that they did not long remain there, he says, "the passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem."

It is probable that Jesus was present at every passover feast after he was twelve years old, but this was his first official visit to Jerusalem, and his presence at this passover was essentially different from his attendance at any passover that had preceded it. He had been baptized; he had begun his public ministry; the Spirit, in the form of a dove, had descended from heaven and had rested upon him; a voice from Heaven had proclaimed him the beloved Son of God; he had met the tempter in the wilder-

ness, had chosen five disciples, and had performed his first miracle, when he came suddenly to his temple.

On his way from Capernaum to Jerusalem he probably traveled with his mother, his brethren and his disciples and a large company of devout Jews who were going up to the great annual feast. His mother and his disciples, who had witnessed the miracle at Cana, believed that "his hour had come," and their hearts were filled with hope. But who can understand or describe his own deep emotion as he realized that he had left the quiet, peaceful, happy home at Nazareth, that he was face to face with his great life work, the work of redeeming a lost world? His hour had come, but he knew that the battle must precede the victory, that the cross must come before the crown; that he must lay down his life in order to destroy the power of the prince of this world. If Moses felt a great burden of responsibility when, commissioned by the God of Abraham, he journeyed from Horeb to Egypt, how much greater was Christ's burden as he went to Jerusalem to contend with the prince of this world for the redemption of his own people. Pharaoh and Egyptian bondage were but types and shadows, but Jesus was to meet the realities that cast these shadows.

When the Lord of the temple came to the temple of the Lord, he came as a refiner and purifier of the sons of Levi. He found the worship of the temple degraded and corrupted by greed of gain, for the house of prayer had been made a house of merchandise, a market house where greed of gain drowned the spirit of worship.

This condition of affairs had come about gradually. Every Israelite, whether rich or poor, was required to pay annually a half shekel as an atonement for his soul, and the priests began to collect this tribute twenty days before the feast. For the convenience of worshippers



who came from other provinces and other countries, it was necessary to have some place where the money they brought with them could be exchanged for this tribute money. It was necessary, also, to have a market where the worshipers could buy victims for sacrifice. Greed of gain and desire to get the best places for exchange and market had led these covetous Jews to encroach more and more on the sacred precincts of the temple. When Jesus saw these degenerate Jews in the temple, making a gain of godliness and defiling the place that had been consecrated to the worship of God, he made a scourge of cords and drove out the sheep and the oxen, overthrew the tables of the money changers, and said to those who sold doves, "Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise."

When Jesus' disciples saw this outburst of righteous indignation, they must have been surprised beyond measure. He seemed very unlike the Jesus that had been pointed out to them as the Lamb of God, and very different from the one who had performed the miracle at Cana. This act suggested that he was the "lion of the tribe of Judah," rather than the Lamb of God, and the disciples remembered that it had been written, "The Zeal of thine house shall eat me up." Ps. 69:9.

John does not call this act of Jesus a miracle, and the account he gives does not warrant us in calling it a supernatural event. The man Christ Jesus was so gentle that he would not break the bruised reed nor quench the glimmering wick, yet his righteous indignation was awe-inspiring and overwhelming. Conscience made cowards of these defilers of the temple. They could bitterly hate the one who had come between them and their sacrilegious greed of gain, but they must wait for their opportunity to get revenge. They did not dare to resist.

Their fear, not their humility, restrained them from doing more than offering a protest, saying, "What sign showest thou unto us seeing thou doest these things."

To this suspiciously meek and submissive question, Jesus answered, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews replied, "Forty and six years was this temple in building and wilt thou raise it up in three days?"

John explains that Jesus spoke of the temple of his body, and adds that, after his resurrection, his disciples remembered that he had said this. This dark saying was also remembered by others, and it enabled Christ's enemies, at his trial, to make it appear that the purifier of the temple was the enemy of the temple. In the court of Caiaphas, long afterwards, two false witnesses testified that they had heard Jesus say, "I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days."

The Jewish leaders also remembered these words, and seemed to have caught their real meaning, for they evidently referred to this saying when, after his death, they went to Pilate, and said, "We remember that this deceiver said, while he was yet alive, 'After three days I will rise again.'" No other recorded words of Jesus could have warranted the Jews in making this statement to Pilate.

It is not necessary to turn aside and consider the question whether this account of the cleansing of the temple given by John can be identified with the accounts given by Matthew, Mark and Luke. It will be sufficient to say that this cleansing took place at the beginning of Christ's public ministry and that the other is placed definitely at its close, so that the two cannot be identified. Moreover, there seems to be good reason why the first and last acts of Christ should be directly connected with the system of worship that had been instituted to typify his own

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great work of redemption. The type had been defiled and degraded, and it was befitting that the antitype should begin his work by purifying his temple, and that he should close his work in the same day.

The impression made on the multitude by the purifying of the temple was favorable, for many believed on his name when they saw the signs which he did. They hailed him as a reformer, and applauded his acts. They would, no doubt, have rallied about him and proclaimed him their leader, if he had asked them to do so, but he knew what was in man and set a true value on the approval of the fickle multitude. They applauded him then as the purifier of the temple and its worship, but, for this act, he was afterward condemned and crucified as the destroyer of the temple. Like every act of real courage, it brought applause from the multitude, but, like every bold, courageous and conscientious attack on sin, it made bitter enemies; these enemies, through fear, kept silence for a time, but, in the end, sought to destroy the reformer. At the very beginning of his life work Christ did the acts and spake the words that helped to nail him to the cross, but he knew what the final outcome would be. Some men enter into the work of fighting sin, thinking that their acts will be appreciated and rewarded by men, and they are disappointed. Christ did not expect his acts to be appreciated and rewarded by men, for he knew what was in man.

## XII

### JESUS CHRIST AND NICODEMUS

John 3:3. "Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

(John 2:23; 3:21.)

**H**OW long Jesus stayed at Jerusalem after the passover can only be inferred from the fact that his works and teachings led many to believe on him. His cleansing of the temple had arrested the attention of all classes, and, while it created enmity, it also laid the foundation for faith in him, and for life-long friendships. Among those who had become interested in the young Galilean prophet was a ruler of the Jews named Nicodemus, a liberal, fair-minded, but cautious, worldly-wise man. He was interested in the new prophet from Nazareth and was willing to accept him as a divinely commissioned teacher, but he feared his provincial rashness, and did not wish to become responsible for him. He felt that, if wisely directed by prudent counsellors, Jesus might become a great leader. He did not venture to come to him openly, but he did come by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him."

Christ's courageous and successful cleansing of the temple was sufficient to arrest the attention and enlist the interest of such a careful observer and discernor of the signs of the times as Nicodemus. The power to inspire

such awe in the hearts of greedy, covetous Jews as would constrain them to give up their sacrilegious but profitable traffic without a struggle was a sufficient sign that this Teacher had come from God. It is probable, also, that Nicodemus had seen other signs that convinced him that Jesus spake and acted with divine authority.

This visit of a recognized ruler of the Jews was a remarkable and an encouraging event; but his coming by night suggested doubt as to the final issue. The visit of Nicodemus was a visit for investigation, rather than for such simple, frank inquiry as that of Andrew and John, when they said, "Master, where dwellest thou?" As a man full of wordly wisdom he would investigate before accepting or rejecting the claims of one in whom he had some interest. He was naturally timid and cautious, and his position as a ruler of the Jews developed this natural tendency. He was in an atmosphere of formalism, in an environment where respectability and the established order of things determined questions of right and wrong. He could not give his endorsement to anything that would disturb the order of society, even if it commended itself to his intelligence and conscience. He was in sympathy with the Reformer who had cleansed the temple, but the method seemed to savour of rashness and imprudence, and he did not wish to commit himself to a movement until he had counted the cost.

Jesus met him with the most perfect frankness. He accepted the position assigned him, as "a teacher come from God," and, understanding Nicodemus perfectly, answered his salutation by saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

There was neither compliment nor disrespect in these words of Jesus. It was too serious a matter to leave any



room for compliments. He had been addressed as "a teacher come from God," by a man who had been looking upon religion as a matter of outward forms and mere respectability, by one who would not think of doing anything that was reckoned profane or irreverent, by one who, in reality, was only a formalist; Jesus said to this man in the most earnest and impressive way, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God." It was a solemn assurance that all his forms were of no value without the radical renewal of the heart.

Nicodemus said in astonishment, "How can a man be born when he is old?" He did not see that religion was so radical a thing that it could be called a new birth or an actual regeneration. Jesus replied with even greater emphasis, that all outward forms of religion were absolutely worthless when they were not the fruit of the Spirit of God, implanting new life in the heart. He said again, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again." He then told Nicodemus that this birth from above was as mysterious as the wind, and known only by its results. When Nicodemus asked "how can these things be?" Jesus answered, "Art thou a teacher of Israel and understandest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto you, we speak that we do know, and bear witness of that we have seen and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you heavenly things?"

Assuming that John 3:13-21, is a continuation of the account of the conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus proceeded to explain that he was more than "a teacher come

from God." He said, "No man hath ascended into heaven but he that descended out of heaven, even the Son of man who is in heaven." Then he added, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life." Nicodemus had recognized Jesus as a teacher, but Jesus declared that he was more than a teacher; that, when lifted up from the earth as the serpent was lifted up, he would give eternal life to every one who looked upon him with the eye of faith. He went on to tell Nicodemus of the love of God that prompted him to give eternal life to men, and, in doing this, he incidentally proclaimed himself the Son of God, for he said, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." Then he added that God's purpose was not to condemn, but to save the world, and warned Nicodemus that this very love of God might be rejected and made the reason for condemnation, as he said, "This is the judgment that the light is come into the world and men loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil."

Looked at from the standpoint of human wisdom, Jesus, at the beginning of his public ministry at Jerusalem, did not seem tactful and prudent. He had found a great evil entrenched behind a custom that had been tolerated until it had become respectable, and, without waiting to secure the co-operation of others, he had attacked and overthrown it. In doing this, he had incurred the intense hatred of all the covetous and greedy money changers and others who had been defiling the temple. He had made relentless enemies that would not forget him, and those who applauded him would forget him. Then he had met this Jewish ruler, and had taught doctrines that were as

radical and revolutionary as his acts had seemed rash and imprudent. Yet this was God's way, and in all this Jesus acted with divine wisdom. In all this he is an example for his followers. So far as Christians can act with the same pure motives that Jesus did when he purified the temple, so far they may follow his example. So far as they have the same pure motives that he had, they should be as frank as he was with Nicodemus.

A lady once chided Frederick W. Robertson for doing a righteous thing which she thought imprudent. When she told him what she thought would be the evil consequences to himself, he replied, "I don't care." When she said, "You know what became of 'I don't care'?" he answered, with the deepest reverence, "Yes, he was crucified on Calvary." Christ's example never warrants real imprudence, and men need to be sure that they have as perfect knowledge and as pure motives as he had before they plead his example for doing what their fellow-men deem imprudent; but, when any man knows perfectly that he is confronted with wrong that should be overthrown, his duty is plain; and, if he falter, he is not Christlike; if he hesitate, he has not the spirit of the kingdom of God.

### XIII

## THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS BAPTIZING IN JUDEA

John 3: 30. "He must increase, but I must decrease."  
(John 3: 22-36.)

**A**FTER the conversation with Nicodemus Jesus and his disciples went from Jerusalem out into the rural districts of Judea. Just where he went is not known, but from what follows it is evident that he went into the neighbourhood where John was baptizing, and John had come west of the Jordan to an unknown place called Ænon near Salim. Near this place the disciples of Jesus, not only baptized, but baptized to such an extent as to excite the jealousy of John's disciples, and to give rise to a report that Jesus was baptizing more disciples than John. In process of time a dispute arose between John's disciples and a Jew about purifying, and this dispute probably related to the necessity for John's baptism, or the relative merits of the two baptisms.

Why the disciples of Jesus baptized in the early part of his ministry and discontinued it afterwards is not known. This event seems to have been recorded because it gave John another opportunity to bear witness to Jesus Christ. When the disciples of John came to him with the report that "all men" were coming to Jesus, they had sincere sorrow for their own master, and it seemed to them the harder to bear because he had been overshadowed and superseded by one whom he had introduced. In their re-

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port to John they speak of Jesus as "he that was with thee beyond Jordan to whom thou bearest witness."

John's answer to his disciples is replete with cheerful, humble loyalty. He said "A man can receive nothing except it have been give him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom which standeth and heareth him rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice; this my joy, therefore, is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease.'" He was the true friend and not in any sense the rival of the Christ. It was the fullness of his joy that Christ should increase even if it involved his decrease.

We assume that John 3: 31-36 is a report of what John the Baptist said, rather than a statement of the evangelist's own views of Christ. This seems evident because the 31st verse introduces a reason why Christ should increase, as it says, "He that cometh from above is above all; he that is of the earth is of the earth, and of the earth he speaketh; he that cometh from heaven is above all." What follows is in exact accord with what Jesus said to Nicodemus, and is an expansion of what John the Baptist had said of Jesus when he saw him on the banks of the Jordan and called him "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." He now describes him as "He whom God hath sent," and as "the Son of God," and he adds, "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son, the wrath of God abideth on him."

John sounds the keynote of true Christian endeavor in all the ages, as he says, with cheerful, trustful, loving faith, and with untainted integrity, "He must increase, but I must decrease." The great Apostle to the Gentiles



had only reached the same height of loving consecration, when he exclaimed, "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death." The Forerunner had the spirit of the kingdom and the mind of the Master, for Jesus said of himself, "I came, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me."

In outward appearance, in manner of living, and in methods of working, John the Baptist was very different from his Lord; but, when we look through the coarse raiment and the rugged exterior, we find in John the same mind that was in Christ Jesus. He was preeminent for his unselfishness, his humility and his holy courage. He recognized the great truth that each man has his own place and his own part in the outworkings of God's holy purposes, and that "a man can receive nothing except it have been given him from heaven." In a less degree, and on a lower plane, he exhibited the mind of Jesus, who afterwards said to the Father, "Not my will but thine be done."

True disciples may differ very greatly in manner of life and in outward appearance, but the essential mark of discipleship in every case is the mind of Christ Godward and manward, for, "If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his."

## XIV

### JESUS IN SAMARIA

John 4:4. "And he must needs pass through Samaria."  
(John 4: 1-42.)

WHEN Jesus knew that the Pharisees had heard that he was making and baptizing more disciples than John, he left Judea and went to Galilee. This rumor was not accurate, for Jesus disciples baptized, but he did not baptize any one. Why this rumour should be considered a sufficient reason for his going away is not known. He might have gone away in order to prevent odious comparisons that would emphasize the contrast between John's decrease and his own increase. He might have gone because he knew that his presence was embarrassing John and that he could not help him in any way.

He was on the borders of Samaria, not far from Ænon, and his direct route to Galilee was through Samaria; yet, the evangelist says, "He must needs pass through Samaria." The expression "must needs" did not refer to any geographical necessity, for many of the Jews, on account of their hatred and distrust of the Samaritans, went to Galilee by way of Perea. Jesus did not share either this hatred or this fear, for he knew that he was as safe in Samaria as he was in Judea, and he would have gone to Galilee by way of Samaria if he had no special reason for going some other way. The words of the evangelist "must needs" indicate that he had some special

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reason for going through Samaria, and this reason appears afterwards.

He began his journey early in the morning, for about noon he came to a city of Samaria named Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. The exact location is not known, but it is probable that the town now called Askar is the Sychar of Christ's day. If so, it was not less than twenty miles from the nearest point in Judea, and about two miles from the ancient Sychem or Shechem, near the entrance to the narrow valley between Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim.

Jacob's well was not far from the village, and, when Jesus came to the well, he was hungry, thirsty and weary, and rested on one of the seats by the well while his disciples went to the village to buy food. All his surroundings were adapted to suggest important events in the history of God's people. Twenty centuries before the Christ was born, Jacob had erected an altar here and had called it Ebelohe-Israel. In this neighborhood the cruel and treacherous sons of Jacob, using a religious rite as a snare, had murdered the Shechemites. On the sides of Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim, after the capture of Ai, Joshua had assembled all Israel and, with impressive emphasis, had read the law of the Lord. Here, also, he afterwards assembled all the leaders of Israel and, having delivered his farewell address, set up a great stone under an oak as a sign of Israel's solemn covenant to serve Jehovah.

As Jesus sat by the well of Jacob his solitude was interrupted by the coming of a Samaritan woman to draw water from the well. He said to the woman, "Give me to drink." The woman replied, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me who am a Samaritan woman?" To this flippant, ungracious retort Jesus re-

plied, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." The woman did not perceive the deeper meaning of Christ's words and replied, "Thou hast nothing to draw with and the well is deep; from whence then hast thou that living water?" There was, however, something that impressed her, for she added, "Art thou greater than our father Jacob who gave us the well and drank thereof himself?" She evidently knew that Jesus did not mean that he would merely give her water from this well. There was reverence as well as objection in the question, "Art thou greater than our father Jacob?" Jesus replied, "Every one that drinketh of this water shall thirst again, but whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall become in him a well of water springing up into eternal life." This was equivalent to saying "Yes I am greater than our father Jacob, for he that drinks of the living waters that I shall give shall never thirst."

The woman seemed to catch a glimpse of the profound meaning of our Lord's words, for, dropping the boastful, flippant manner with which she had begun the conversation, she became a humble, earnest suppliant, and exclaimed, "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come all the way hither to draw." She knew now that Jesus was speaking of greater things than physical thirst and material water. Her earnest words indicate obscure spiritual vision, but they reveal some sense of need, some spiritual soul-thirst that was crying out for help.

Jesus' answer to this ardent request seemed like a refusal and a desire to change the subject, for he said to the woman, "Go call thy husband and come hither." This seemed like a suggestion that it was not becoming that

she should converse alone with a stranger, and, according to prevailing social custom, that was true. But the words meant far more. They touched her conscience, and she answered, "I have no husband." Her answer was true, but it was only part of the truth, and, in order to reveal her to herself, Jesus answered, "Thou hast well said, I have no husband. For thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband; in that thou saidst truly."

These words were the sword of the Spirit searching her heart and quickening her conscience. When Jesus first met Nathanael he said, "Behold an Israelite indeed in whom there is no guile," and, when he explained that he had seen him under the fig tree, he touched some great secret in Nathanael's life. When he first met this woman he touched the secret of her life, and her conscience, and she said, "I perceive that thou art a prophet."

We might have expected the woman to ask one whom she recognized as a prophet some personal questions that directly concerned her own sinfulness and its remedy, but, like many others, she found it easier to take up a mooted question concerning religious worship than to face the ugly facts in her own life, and she said to Jesus, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Jesus answered her question as patiently and as kindly as he would have answered a question of Nicodemus, saying, "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father."

They were under the shadow of Mt. Gerizim, the mountain on which this woman believed that Abraham had offered up Isaac. Jesus would not rudely shock her religious beliefs; but he would correct them, and he



added, "Ye worship that which ye know not; we worship that which we know; for salvation is of the Jews; but the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

This was a complete answer to her question. It revealed the folly of thinking that any outward form or any particular place of worship could render the worship acceptable to God or profitable to the worshipper if there were not true, hearty, spiritual devotion. The woman seemed to catch a glimpse of the profound significance of our Lord's words, and revealed her sense of need, coupled with a vague hope, as she said, "I know that Messiah cometh (who is called Christ) when he is come he will tell us all things." To this Samaritan confession of a Messianic hope, Jesus replied, "I that speak to thee am he."

At this point the disciples returned with food, and they marveled that their Master was, not only talking with a Samaritan woman, but that he was so deeply interested in his conversation with her that he did not notice their return.

They did not, however, interrupt the conversation, but after the woman had gone, they said, "Rabbi eat." As if awakening from self communion, he answered, "I have meat to eat that ye know not." These words added to the astonishment of the disciples, and they said one to another, "Hath any man brought him ought to eat?" But he replied, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work."

Here is the explanation of the words of the evangelist as he wrote, "He must needs pass through Samaria."

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Here was a work that was more to him than food or drink. He must needs pass through Samaria in order to reveal to this woman the gift of God. He came this way that he might make himself known to a Samaritan woman as the promised Messiah.

When Jesus was twelve years of age, at the temple in Jerusalem, he said to his mother, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Now, after he had entered upon his life work, he declared that the doing of the will of him that sent him was more important than hunger or thirst or meat.

Jesus then reminded his disciples of the saying, "There are yet four months and then cometh the harvest," and he added, "Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white already unto the harvest." The great spiritual harvest field of Samaria was ready to be reaped, and the reapers who would gather the fruit unto eternal life would receive wages, and there was no necessity for waiting four months.

This was the first preaching of the gospel in Samaria. When our Lord began his ministry at Jerusalem, by cleansing the temple and talking so plainly to Nicodemus, he was not guided by what men called worldly wisdom. Shrewd men of the world could say that he was not tactful, prudent and diplomatic, that he did not understand human nature; nevertheless, worldly wisdom could see good reasons for Christ's talking to Nicodemus about the Kingdom of God, for Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews, and he had influence; but what can worldly wisdom say of Christ's method of revealing his Messianic claims to the Samaritans? Worldly wisdom would have organized a committee of the leading citizens of the City of Samaria, and would have announced before-hand the character and the claims of the Coming One. Jesus, hungry,

thirsty and weary, at Jacob's well, entered into conversation with a sinful woman, and before that conversation ended he had revealed to her the most profound spiritual truths and had announced himself as the Messiah. By this act he made this woman his representative to the Samaritan people. Could any one imagine anything more unwise? Would not the reputation of this woman add to Samaritan prejudice against a Jewish teacher of religion? Did he not place an obstacle in the path of others by making this Samaritan woman his first convert and representative to the Samaritan people?

In reply, it is only necessary to say that the wisdom of God, the wisdom from above, is essentially different from mere worldly wisdom. God sees the heart, and Jesus, with his divine wisdom, had as good reason for talking with this woman and revealing himself to her as he had for talking to Nicodemus or any other correct and reputable ruler of the Jews. It was as important that she should be born again, that she should be able to offer to God spiritual worship, as it was that Nicodemus should see the kingdom of God. Christ came to call sinners to repentance; he came to seek and to save the lost, and his method of proclaiming himself to the Samaritans was not essentially different from the general course of life that afterwards led to his being called "a friend of publicans and sinners."

It should be said, also, that the results approved the wisdom of our Lord's method. The woman did not hesitate and count the cost of professing her faith. She forgot her errand to the well; and, leaving her water pot, went to the city, and said to the men of the city, "Come, see a man, who told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ?" She was the best example of courage and enthusiasm that had yet appeared. Philip had found

his friend Nathanael; Andrew had found his brother Peter, but all were Jews. This woman came to a great multitude of Samaritans and she asked them to recognize a Jew, a hereditary enemy of their nation, as the long looked for Messiah. Her intense earnestness and enthusiasm were most persuasive and most convincing, for many of those who heard her believed on Christ because of her words, while many others, after they had seen and talked with Jesus, said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of thy speaking, for we have heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world."

In this beautiful sketch, there is something that is adapted to touch the tenderest cords in the human heart, something that so commends the love of God as to make it omnipotent. In this sketch there is a lesson for all who would win men to Christ. God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty. When we see the Son of God, hungry, thirsty and weary so deeply interested in the salvation of this one sinful woman as to forget hunger and thirst, we may learn how we should strive to carry out the great commission and preach the Gospel to every creature.

## XV

### JESUS REJECTED AT NAZARETH

John 4: 44. "For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honor in his own country."

(Matthew 4: 12-17 and 13: 53-58 and 14: 3; Mark 1: 14-15; 6: 1-6; Luke 3: 19-20 and 4: 14-20; John 4: 43-54.)

**A**FTER the incident at Sychar Jesus visited his old home at Nazareth, but it seems nearly impossible to determine the exact time when this visit was made. The older writers, not being able to harmonize the different accounts, concluded that Jesus must have visited Nazareth twice during his public ministry, but later writers reject this theory as inconsistent and impossible.

It may not be amiss to stop here long enough to come to some definite conclusion concerning the attempts to harmonize the gospels. From the time of Eusebius until the present, Bible students have sought to form a connected account of our Saviour's life out of the different gospels, and have not succeeded. The evangelists seem to have constructed their narratives without special regard to the chronological order of events. They begin their sketches with an account of the birth of Christ, and they end with an account of his death, but the intervening events of his life are presented with very little reference to time. From the time of the temptation until the last journey to Jerusalem, Matthew passes from one event to another without giving any clue to the exact time, except the expression "then," or, "in those days." He aims to present the character of Jesus, apart from time and



place, by grouping kindred actions and discourses. Mark seems to aim at a vivid presentation of some facts in our Lord's life without seeking to show how these facts are related to each other. Luke has more regard for the chronological order of events, but he is some times very indefinite; and John confines himself, for the most part, to a sketch of the Judean ministry.

Recognizing these evident facts, we should not expect to be able to form a perfect harmony, but we need not be surprised nor discouraged by our failure to do so. What once seemed a hindrance to faith, has come to be recognized as a help. The fact that we cannot always know just how to harmonize the four gospels proves conclusively that the writers were not in collusion; that the four gospels are independent sketches of the person and work of Christ and that they can, therefore, be used to explain and confirm each other.

A careful study and comparison of all the gospel narratives warrants the inference that Jesus only visited Nazareth once during his public ministry, and that this visit took place not long after the event at Sychar. He did not, however, go directly from Sychar to Nazareth, but journeyed from place to place, teaching and showing signs or performing miracles at different places. The healing of the nobleman's son at Capernaum, recorded in the Gospel by John (4:46-54) probably occurred on this journey.

After saying that Jesus spent two days with the Samaritans who besought him to abide with them, John says, "He went forth from thence into Galilee," and he adds, "For Jesus himself testified that a prophet hath no honour in his own country."

If John had said no more than this it might have been inferred that Jesus was intentionally going from Sa-

maria, not his own country, and where he had honour, to Galilee, his own country, where he would have no honour. But John goes on to say, "The Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem." It seems evident, therefore, that John is, not speaking merely of our Lord's visit to Nazareth, but of his going to other points in Galilee, and when he speaks of the Galileans receiving him, he refers to what took place before the visit to Nazareth.

Assuming this to be true, and following John's narrative, Jesus came a second time to Cana, where a nobleman from Cana came to him and besought him to come to Capernaum and heal his son who was lying at the point of death. Instead of granting this request at once, Jesus said, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will in no wise believe." The nobleman urged him, saying, "Sir, come down ere my child die." To this second appeal Jesus replied, "Go thy way, thy son liveth." The nobleman believed Jesus and went his way, and, as he was going, his servants met him with the news that his son was living, and that the fever left him at the very hour when Jesus had said, "Thy son liveth." John then adds that the nobleman and all his house believed on Jesus. He tells us also that this was the second sign that Jesus had performed after coming out of Judea into Galilee.

Luke gives the most complete account of what took place at Nazareth. After saying that Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and that his fame went out through all that region, and that he taught in the synagogue being glorified by all, Luke adds, "He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up and he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read."

The synagogue was to the Jews what the Christian "church" or "meeting house" is to the Christian. It was the place for reading and expounding the sacred Scriptures on the Sabbath day and for public prayer. There were no ordained ministers to conduct the services and Scripture lessons, one from the law and the other from the prophets, might be read by any capable person selected for the purpose by the ruler of the synagogue. The reader stood while reading and, if he added comments or expositions, he sat while speaking. The expression, "as his custom was," may refer to what Jesus was accustomed to do when he dwelt in Nazareth before he began his public ministry.

When Jesus stood up to read on this occasion it was probably the time for the second lesson, and he was given the roll of the Prophet Isaiah. He opened the roll, and found the place where it is written, (Isaiah 61: 1-2).

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor;  
He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,  
And recovering of sight to the blind,  
To set at liberty those who are bruised  
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

The usual lesson was from three to twenty-one verses, but Christ probably only read the two quoted by the evangelist and then sat down. It was an impressive moment, and the brevity of the lesson added to the rapt attention with which the congregation regarded Jesus when he began his discourse, saying, "To-day hath this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears."

As they listened all seemed to be deeply interested and most favorably impressed, for "they wondered at the words of grace that proceeded out of his mouth." This

favorable impression, however, soon began to take the form of critical questioning, and they said one to another, "Is not this the Son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" When Jesus perceived this change of sentiment he said, "Doubtless ye will say unto me this parable, Physician, heal thyself; whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thine own country."

These words seem to refer to the motives that were prompting those who were objecting to him. They were saying within themselves that if he performed as great miracles as had been reported, if he turned water into wine at Cana, and healed the nobleman's son at Capernaum, how is it that he is only a carpenter, and that his mother is poor? Why is he not doing something for himself and his family? Why does not the physician heal himself by making himself and his family rich and powerful?

If Jesus had commanded stones to become bread; if he had turned rocks into precious gems and transformed his mother's humble home into a costly and stately palace; if he had used his supernatural powers to enrich and exalt himself and his family, he would have had honour in his own country. Men are greatly honoured in their own towns and among their own kindred when they succeed in accumulating great wealth, or attain high worldly honours, and then use their worldly honours and influence to enrich and exalt their own families and acquaintances. If Jesus had exerted his marvelous powers to enrich and exalt himself, if he had ministered to the covetousness and ambition of his family and neighbours in Nazareth, he would have been honoured in his own country. Self sacrifice for others does not give one



honor in his own country or amongst his own kindred and neighbours, especially if he ask them to share his self sacrifice.

When the wonder and enthusiasm with which all listened to the marvelous words that first fell from the Master's lips began to give place to the thought that this was only the carpenter, and that they knew all about his family; when they began to demand some such signs as had been reported from Capernaum and elsewhere, he said, "No prophet is acceptable in his own country." Then he reminded them of the fact that the prophet Elijah had not been sent to any of the many widows in Israel, but that he had been sent to a widow dwelling in Zarephath, in the land of Sidon. He also reminded them that Elisha had not healed any one of the many lepers in Israel, but that he had healed Naaman, the Syrian.

This reference to what had been done by Elijah and Elisha for a Sidonian and a Syrian, and not for sufferers of their own nation, seems to be given as an explanation of and a reason for Jesus' treatment of the citizens of Nazareth. It so enraged his audience that they cast him forth out of the synagogue and led him to the brow of the hill on which the city was built that they might cast him down headlong. They, not only rejected him, but they were so filled with wrath against him that they wished to kill him.

How can this sudden and complete change in sentiment that has transformed a company of worshippers into a den of wild beasts be explained? What has Jesus done to bring about such a change in the sentiments of his audience? He has read two verses from the Prophecy of Isaiah and has said that the prophecy was fulfilled in himself. He has refused to perform miracles and has called attention to what two of their prophets had done in the olden times.



If these facts do not seem to furnish any rational excuse for, or any explanation of, the sudden change in the minds of the people of Nazareth, we may give a supernatural explanation; we may say that Satan entered into the hearts of these people, and that their mad rage against the Lord's anointed was the direct result of the presence of the evil one. In Job's day, when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan came also among them, for he wished to destroy Job. He had greater reason for being present with the congregation at Nazareth when Jesus, the Christ, had refused his offers and was proclaiming himself the Lord's anointed.

In the same way it may be explained that Jesus' escape at this time was a miracle wrought to protect his life until he had performed his work.

On the other hand, the inspired narratives of this event do not require us to seek any supernatural explanation and it may need no other explanation than that of the foolishness and fickleness of an ordinary congregation. At the beginning of our Lord's discourse, the audience recognized him as one of their own people; they were vain of the reputation he had gained for himself and for his town, and they were filled with enthusiasm by his gracious words. But he touched their selfish pride when he claimed for himself the superior position of the Lord's anointed, and refused to do for them what he had done for others. He aroused their strong national prejudices and turned their intense enthusiasm into wrathful indignation, so that they became an angry mob and were capable of committing any crime.

Whatever the explanation Jesus marvelled at their unbelief, and taking advantage of their confusion, he passed through the midst of them and went his way.

## 98 JESUS CHRIST, THE REVEALER OF GOD

The people of Nazareth had rejected and would have slain the Christ. They did not know the day of their visitation. They did not seize their opportunity, and Jesus never again came to Nazareth. How shall we explain the difference between this reception and his reception by the Samaritans who had besought him to tarry with them? Possibly in this way. The Samaritan woman was waiting and longing for the Christ who would reveal all spiritual truths and satisfy all spiritual soul thirst or desire, and the seed of the Gospel fell into good soil when it fell into her heart. The people of Nazareth, on the other hand, were waiting for some miracle worker who would minister to their selfish pride by restoring their material kingdom and advancing their worldly interests, and, when Jesus preached to them, the good seed fell upon the barren rock of selfishness.

## XVI

### FIRST SABBATH IN CAPERNAUM

Luke 4: 31-32. "And he came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the Sabbath day; and they were astonished at his teaching; for his word was with authority."

(Matthew 4: 13-18; Mark 1: 21-34; Luke 4: 31-41.)

**W**HEN Jesus was rejected at Nazareth he came to Capernaum, and it was known afterwards as "his own city" (Mat. 9:1). In order to have a correct knowledge of this history it should be borne in mind that Jesus had, up to this time, only five disciples. Three of these disciples, Peter, John and Andrew, lived in Capernaum; Philip lived in Bethsaida, and Nathanael in Cana. It is probable that these five disciples, who had been with him when he was in Judea and in Samaria, did not go with him to Nazareth, but went to their homes, while he went to his home. His mother and other members of his family either left Nazareth with him after he escaped from the angry mob, or followed him afterwards, for, when they are again mentioned by the evangelist, they are at Capernaum.

Jesus' distress on account of being driven from his home would be greatly intensified by the thought that his mother and kindred would suffer with him and on his account. Luke does not attempt to describe the emotions of Jesus as he escaped from his enemies and took his last look at the many hallowed associations of his youth

and early manhood. He does, however, present a striking contrast, when he tells of the intense wrath of the people as they cast Jesus forth from the synagogue and attempted to hurl him from the precipice or brow of the hill, and then adds, "but he passing through the midst of them went his way." The people were mad with rage, but Jesus seemed the embodiment of peace, the peace of God that could not be disturbed.

Whether Jesus went directly from Nazareth to Capernaum is uncertain, but Luke's words, "he came down to Capernaum," indicate that he did not stop on the way at Cana or elsewhere, but spent the next Sabbath in the synagogue at Capernaum.

Capernaum was less than twenty miles from Nazareth and reports of what had taken place at Nazareth would interest the people at Capernaum and would attract a large congregation. Some of Christ's disciples lived in Capernaum, and the nobleman, whose son he had healed, dwelt there, and he may have had other friends and acquaintances in the place. These facts explain his being invited to act as a teacher in the synagogue on the Sabbath. The people heard with astonishment and with approval, "for he taught them as having authority, and not as the Scribes." It was not a formal, perfunctory service. His words aroused, convinced and controlled his hearers, and they realized that truth was not a dead letter but a living power.

There was in the synagogue that morning a demoniac possessed by an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, "Ah! what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God."

It requires no effort of the imagination to picture this scene. The congregation were intensely interested in

what Jesus was saying. All their emotions had been stirred by him who spake as never man spake. As they listened with rapt attention to the living truths and breathing words that fell from the lips of the Great Teacher, this cry of the demoniac would produce more than an electric shock and would test the strongest nerves. Before the excitement could manifest itself, except by breathless silence, Jesus answer'd the demoniac's cry and, recognizing a dual personality, distinguishing the man from the demon that possessed him, said to the demon, "Hold thy peace and come out of him." The demon obeyed, and, when he had thrown the man down, he came out of him, leaving the man unharmed. This turned the excitement into awe and amazement and the people began to say one to another, "What is this word? for with authority he commandeth the unclean spirits and they come out."

In the synagogue at Nazareth the people sought for signs and did not get them, but in the synagogue at Capernaum, where the congregation were so interested in the Master's words as to not think of signs, he gave this evidence of supernatural power, and his fame went abroad throughout all that part of Galilee.

This first account of Christ's casting out a demon or evil spirit suggests the following questions: What is the meaning of the word *daimon*, when it is used in the Scriptures? Wherein does the demoniac, or one possessed by the demon differ from one who is merely insane? Do men in this age have such demons or evil spirits as possessed this man whom Christ healed in the synagogue at Capernaum?

These are hard questions, and neither the physiologist nor the psychologist can give any satisfactory answer. All that the wisest can do at present is to humbly use the light



that the Scriptures throw on these dark problems. Between the material and the spiritual world, between the physical, mental and spiritual realms there lies a dark and unexplored region into which no ray from the lamp of science has ever penetrated; and, when we stand on the borders of this unknown land, we can but realize that there are things between heaven and earth that are not dreamed of in our philosophy. How disembodied spirits can influence men and women while there are living in this world, no one can say with absolute certainty; nor can the wisest express more than his own opinion when he asserts that the *daimon* of Christ's day was, or was not, essentially different from anything that exists amongst men in these days.

When we turn to the Bible for light we find a very definite revelation of two kingdoms in this world, a kingdom of light and a kingdom of darkness, a kingdom of God and a kingdom of Satan. For the establishing of his kingdom, God sent forth his own Son, the Prince of Peace, and he sent also his angels as ministering spirits to minister to his people. The prince of darkness also sends his angels or evil spirits, and, either individually or in legions, they seek the injury and destruction of men. This idea of demons or evil spirits did not come into Jewish thought from their contact with polytheistic nations. It has a prominent place in the first book of the Old Testament in the story of man's fall through temptation by the serpent. It had its fullest development in the time when Jesus Christ was on the earth. More clearly and more constantly than any other teacher of religion, Jesus recognized the existence and power of Satan and of subordinate evil spirits. There had not been so great manifestation of the presence and power of evil spirits before Christ's coming as there was when he was in the world

and there has not been so great manifestation since that time. That was the time when the powers of good and evil met in this world as they never had met before in all this world's history. No one can read the New Testament intelligently and believingly without coming to the conclusion that there was an essential difference between one who was possessed by a demon and one who was suffering from any mere physical or mental disease, or from a combination of physical and mental diseases. Demoniacs were essentially different from sick or insane, or sick and insane persons. When Jesus healed demoniacs, he recognized a dual personality, rebuking and exercising the evil spirits while saving and helping their victims. (Mark 1:25, and 5:8, and 7:29.)

The most important teachings of the Bible on this subject may be summed up in this way. First, what is unholy in mankind has its root, not in men, but in a higher region of existence. Second, these evil influences from this higher region may be received or rejected by men. They were received by the first Adam, and the consequences may be seen in the prevalence of sin and suffering. They were rejected by the second Adam, and in him men may be redeemed from the consequences of the act of the first Adam, and may be perfectly protected against all the influences of Satan and his demons.

From the synagogue Jesus went to the home of Simon Peter, where he found Simon's mother-in-law sick, and, taking her by the hand, he healed her. The healing was instantaneous and complete, for she rose from her bed and ministered to them. Regard for the Sabbath would give our Lord a quiet afternoon in Peter's home, though his healing the demoniac in the synagogue does not seem to have been criticised as a violation of the Sabbath. His healing on the Sabbath day was one of the most serious

charges that his enemies brought against him afterwards, but the people were so amazed by the exercise of his power over demons that they did not seem to think of objecting at this time.

When the sun had set and the Sabbath was ended, multitudes came to the home of Peter where Jesus was staying, bringing their sick and suffering friends, and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them. Other demoniacs came, and the demons crying out, "Thou art the Son of God," were silenced and exorcised. No cry for help was unheeded; no sufferer was sent away unhealed, and the evangelist Matthew saw in this day's work the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah, "Surely he bore our griefs and carried our sorrows." It was a great day in our Lord's ministry. It revealed and emphasized one side of the mission of the Christian church in this sinning, suffering world. Disciples of Christ in this age do not have the power to perform miracles of healing as Jesus did, but the Christian church in its individual members, does possess medical and surgical skill to open many blind eyes, unstop deaf ears and heal disease, and the possession of this power throws on the church corresponding responsibility. While it is the great mission of the Christian church to build up a spiritual kingdom of God in the world, it is also of the utmost importance that the Christian church, as an organization, make provision for ministering to the temporal welfare of those who need it by the erection and maintaining of hospitals and other beneficent institutions.

## XVII

### BY THE SEA OF GALILEE

Matthew 4: 18. "And walking by the Sea of Galilee he saw two brethren, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men."

(Mat. 4: 19-22; Mark 1: 16-20; Luke 5: 1-11.)

THE order of events that seem to present fewest difficulties at this point of the history, is as follows. From Sychar Jesus went with his disciples to Cana, the home of Nathanael. While he was at Cana a Capernaum nobleman, an officer of Herod Antipas, came and besought him to heal his son who was sick at Capernaum. Jesus granted this request without going to Capernaum, and then went to Nazareth, his own home, and his disciples went to their own homes, Andrew, Peter and John resuming their avocations as fishermen at Capernaum, while Philip probably went to Bethsaida, and Nathanael to Capernaum. After Jesus had been rejected at Nazareth he came to Capernaum, but did not teach publicly until the Sabbath when he taught in the synagogue where he healed a demoniac. He went from the synagogue to the home of Simon Peter, where he healed Peter's mother-in-law and, after sunset, the end of the Sabbath, he healed a great number of men and women who were suffering from various diseases. The next morning, rising long before day, he went into a

desert place to pray, and when Peter and others found him, he said to them, "Let us go elsewhere into the next town that I may preach there also." (Mark 1:38.) When the people besought him to stay with them, he delayed going elsewhere for a few days, and devoted his time to teaching the people. On one of these days, probably the first day of the week, he called Andrew, Peter, James and John to follow him and become fishers of men.

The seemingly incidental statement of Mark that "in the morning a great while before day Jesus rose up and went out and departed into a desert place, and there prayed," may not indicate any special time for private prayer, but it certainly is adapted to impress his disciples with the vital importance of prayer. He did not let any kind or degree of work interfere with his being alone with God. In order to be alone with the Father he rose a great while before day and went into the desert.

Jesus was the great center of interest and attraction of the people at Capernaum on this first day of the week. His fame had preceded him; he had healed the demoniac in the presence of the worshippers in the synagogue, and he had healed every one that was brought to him at Peter's home. It is not surprising that, when Peter found him, he said, "All men seek thee." The great mass of the people did not realize their privileges, but they did realize that it was a truth worthy of all acceptance, that there was one in their city who could and would heal all manner of diseases and cast out demons. It was a matter of universal interest. He made no distinction between high and low, rich and poor and would not turn a deaf ear to the cry of any sufferer however unworthy he might be. It was most reasonable that there should be universal and intense excitement throughout the city. Here was hu-



manity's real and recognized sovereign. Here was one who could heal all manner of disease, put an end to all human pain, bind up all broken hearts, give instant relief to all human suffering, soothe into glad silence the universal wail that is forever rising from sinning, suffering humanity. Who in that city, or in any other, could be uninterested in such a Benefactor?

Up to this time, and amidst all this excitement, the disciples, Peter, Andrew and John, had not given up their business as fishermen. Luke, speaking of Jesus, and describing an event that probably occurred on the afternoon of the first day of the week, says, "Now it came to pass while the multitude pressed upon him and heard the Word of God, that he was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret; and he saw two boats standing by the lake: but the fishermen had gone out of them, and were washing their nets." He goes on to say that Jesus entered into one of the boats, which was Simon's and asked him to put out a little from the land. Peter obeyed and Jesus sat down and taught the multitude out of the boat. This indicates that, when Jesus had gone to rest in Peter's home after the Sabbath, the disciples had resumed their work as fishermen. When Jesus could not be found in the early morning they had joined in the search, but when they found him they returned to their boats and their nets, and now, when Jesus is pressed with the crowd, he finds Simon with his boat, and, at his request, Peter turns his boat into a pulpit from which Christ can speak to the people.

When Jesus had ended his discourse he said to Simon, "Launch out now into the deep and let down your nets for a draught." Simon answered, "We toiled all night; and took nothing, but at thy word I will let down the net." He was tired and discouraged but he would do as

the Master directed. When he had let down the net it enclosed so many fish that they could not drag it in without breaking, and they beckoned James and John, their partners, to come to their assistance, and when they came and had taken in the fish both boats were filled to the point of sinking.

All these experienced fishermen were astonished beyond measure, but Peter revealed his true character by doing and saying what the ordinary man would not have done or said. If he had been only a shrewd man of business, with eyes closed to anything greater and better than business success, he would have been silent, keeping his own counsel, hoping that he might have this man as his business partner. Simon Peter was fairly successful in his business, but was not so absorbed in it as to be blind to higher things. He seemed to forget his ordinary avocation when he saw the great draught of fishes. He had seen Jesus' power to heal men and to turn water into wine, but now he saw his power over the inhabitants of the sea. Instead of catching visions of worldly gain, his soul was filled with deeper, better, more sublime emotions, and he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." He had a profound consciousness that he needed something better than fish; but a sense of his own unworthiness led him to ask Jesus to do the thing that above all things he would not have him do. Jesus saw the heart of Peter as distinctly as he heard his voice, and said, "Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men." Though Peter went "a fishing" afterwards it was never again the great business of his life.

James and John, sons of Zebedee, were also fishermen, and were partners with Andrew and Peter. John had already become a disciple of Jesus, but James is now

mentioned for the first time. Luke says, "James and John sons of Zebedee were also amongst those who were astonished at the great draught of fishes." Mark says that James and John had been in the boat with their father mending their nets, and that Jesus also called them and that they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and went after him.

Other inhabitants of Capernaum wished Jesus to remain with them, hoping he would bring them temporal happiness, health and prosperity, but these disciples left all to follow Jesus. The two things are radically and essentially different. One makes a gain of godliness, the other counts godliness great gain, and forsakes all for Christ. Selfish worldlings would sometimes be willing to take Christ as a partner, but the true Christian makes Christ's business his own business. He would not use Christ to accomplish his own purposes, but would surrender himself as the servant of Christ to be used by him. These four disciples, Andrew, Peter, James and John, had something to give up, and, looking back to this event afterwards, they could claim Christ's promise, saying, "We left all and followed thee." The first discipleship of Andrew, John and Peter did not involve any special sacrifice or indicate extraordinary faith, but the step that these four disciples now take would have been impossible if they had not seen in Jesus Christ something on which they set a higher value than they did on all their business prosperity.

## XVIII

### FIRST CIRCUIT OF GALILEE

Matthew 4:23. "And Jesus went about in all Galilee teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom and healing all manner of diseases and all manner of sickness among the people."

(Mat. 4:23-25 and 8:1-4; Mark 1:35-45; Luke 4:42-44 and 5:12-16.)

WHETHER Jesus' first preaching tour preceded his going up to Jerusalem to a feast spoken of in the fifth chapter of John, is doubtful, but this doubt is largely the result of uncertainty as to whether that was a feast of the passover, or some other feast. John mentions five Jewish feasts at which our Lord was present, viz: the passover that followed his baptism, (John 2:13) a feast of the Jews (John 5:1), a feast of tabernacles to which he went privately (John 7:2); a feast of the dedication (John 10:22), and the feast of the passover at which he suffered (John 12:13). It is probable that the feast spoken of, John 5:1, was a feast of the passover, and that the first preaching tour in Galilee preceding the going up to Jerusalem to attend it.

The extent of this preaching tour is uncertain. If we were to take the words of Matthew and Mark literally, we would conclude that our Lord visited all parts of Galilee before he returned to Capernaum, but these evangelists frequently condense the history of a long

period into a few words, and they may have done so here. Combining all the different accounts, it seems probable that the first circuit of Galilee did not include all parts of the province. Greswell suggests that Jesus went along the western side of the Jordan, northward, then along the borders of the tetrarchy of Philip, westward, then by the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, southward, and finally along the northern boundaries of Samaria back to the sea of Galilee. This would have been an extensive tour, requiring not less than three months, and it is only the conjecture of one who has carefully studied the subject. The one fact that seems to be emphasised is that Capernaum was now Christ's home, and the center from which he went out to preach, or went up to Jerusalem. Matthew finds in this fact a fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah, who had said:

"The land of Zebulon and the land of Naphthali,  
Toward the sea, beyond Jordan,  
Galilee of the Gentiles,  
The people which sat in darkness  
Saw a great light,  
And to them which sat in the region of the shadow of death,  
To them did light spring up."

Concerning the miracles of Jesus during this first circuit of Galilee, we have no definite information. Luke assigns to this period the healing of a leper in one of the cities, though Matthew gives an account of it after his account of the sermon on the Mount. Olshausen says, "The position given to this event by Matthew may be chronologically correct, and the healing of the leper may have happened immediately after the Sermon on the Mount." Nevertheless, it seems more in accord with what we may learn from all the synoptic gospels to place this miracle where it is placed by Mark and Luke.



This healing of a leper was so great an event as to cause the evangelists to lose sight of time and place. Their narratives differ slightly in form of expression, but combine with and supplement each other in such a way as to give a vivid and most impressive picture of the whole scene. Every movement, every attitude, every word is carefully noted by the different writers. The man is full of leprosy when he sees Jesus. Leprosy was regarded as the most dreadful of all human diseases that afflicted humanity, and this man was full of leprosy. The disease was fully developed, and the man was excluded from the temple, from every walled town, and from all association with his fellow men. He could not come within four cubits of his more fortunate brother man. He was compelled to go about with rent garments, with bare head and covered lip and to proclaim himself "unclean." He was ceremonially and physically unclean. His condition was unspeakably distressing and miserable, and his outlook for the future was utterly hopeless when he met Jesus. He had heard of Jesus before and believed that he could save him. When he saw him he fell prostrate at Jesus' feet, crying, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean?" It was the deep of man's great need calling out to the deep of God's great love.

The emotions of Jesus, as he beheld this leper, are described by Mark as he says, "Being moved with compassion he stretched forth his hand and touched him and said, I will, be thou clean, and straightway the leprosy departed from him and he was made clean."

This is the first time that any of the evangelists uses this word to describe the motive or emotion of Jesus Christ, but the word is used frequently afterwards. This leper, with the seeds of physical death rapidly developing, was but a miniature picture of the condition of the

human race until a remedy was found for sin. As Jesus looked on this leper so God looks on sin burdened humanity, and the whole scheme of redemption finds its motive described by the one word compassion, as it is applied to Jesus Christ. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son to be the Saviour of men, but divine love, going out to lost sinners, becomes divine compassion.

When Jesus had healed the leper he strictly charged him to not tell any one, and directed him to go and show himself to the priests and present the offering required by the ceremonial law. There may have been many good reasons why this man should be directed to not publish abroad the miracle, but no reason is assigned, and it is not worth while to speculate concerning it. The man did not obey, and as a result, our Lord could not appear in the city and went out into a desert place.

The reason assigned for the command that the healed leper should go and show himself to the priests is to be found in our Lord's respect for the ceremonial law that was still in force. It might be said that it was a violation of the letter of the law to touch the leper, and that by touching him Jesus became unclean. If such an objection should arise it may be easily answered. Jesus could say of the ceremonial law as he said of the Sabbath, "it was made for man," and did not forbid the healing touch of the omnipotent hand of him who is both the giver and the fulfillment of the law. He was not defiled by the touch, but the leper was cleansed by it. He, not only touched, but identified himself with a sinful race in order to save men, at the same time he remained holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. His was the touch of compassion, and it is the touch of compassion now that helps and saves men.

## XIX

### FORGIVING SIN AND HEALING THE PARALYTIC

Mark 2: 5. "And Jesus seeing their faith saith unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins are forgiven."

(Mat. 9: 1-8; Mark 2: 1-12; Luke 5: 17-26.)

**A**FTER cleansing the leper Jesus dwelt for a time in a "desert place" and then entered into Capernaum secretly. Mark says, "After some days it was noised abroad that he was in the house," or "at home." This was equivalent to saying that he was in the home of Peter, and that he had been there some days before it was known that he had returned to the city. As soon as it became known, the place was besieged by multitudes from Capernaum and from every city of Galilee, from Judea and from Jerusalem, so that there was no room, even about the door. While he was preaching, probably in the gallery of the house, where he could be heard by the multitude that barred the entrance to the door, four men came carrying a paralytic. When they could not come near for the crowd, they succeeded in reaching the roof of the house, and, having broken a way through the roof, they let the paralytic down on his couch "in the midst before Jesus."

It is not necessary to explain the peculiar construction of this particular house in order to show how this paralytic was brought to Jesus. The only fact that needs to

be noted in order to learn the lessons that this miracle is designed to teach is the fact that there seemed to be insurmountable difficulties in the way of reaching the great Physician. This man was utterly helpless. It required the united efforts of four men to carry him, and, when they reached the place where Jesus was, it seemed utterly impossible for them to come near because of the crowd. The man could never have reached Jesus himself, and no one man could have brought him. This man's healing was made possible by the united, persevering effort of five men. It is therefore an acted parable showing the necessity of united, harmonious and persevering effort in order to help the helpless.

Instead of touching and healing this paralytic as he had touched and healed the leper, Mark says, "Jesus, seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy, Son thy sins are forgiven." Every word of this record by Mark seems wonderfully suggestive. Jesus saw, not only the paralytic's faith, but he saw "their faith," and, seeing "their faith" he said, not to all, but to the paralytic, "Son, thy sins are forgiven." It was their faith, as well as their united effort that secured for this man the forgiveness of his sins.

When the scribes and Pharisees, who were present, heard Jesus' words, they began to reason in their hearts, saying, "Who is this that speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said to them, "Whether is it easier to say, thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, arise and walk?" It was evidently as easy to say one as to say the other, but a man might say the first and those who heard might question whether he had authority for saying it, while a man saying the second without authority would only bring ridicule on himself. If Jesus had said to the para-

lytic, "Arise and walk," and the paralytic had not obeyed, the reasonable inference would be that the declaration that sins were forgiven was also without authority. But if Jesus, who had declared that this paralytic's sins were forgiven, were to say to the paralytic "Arise and walk," and the paralytic instantly obeyed, it would be just as reasonable to infer that the proclamation of forgiveness was equally authoritative. This would be the judgment of every unprejudiced, intelligent mind, and Jesus left his critics without excuse, when he said, "That ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins," and then turning to the paralytic, said, "Arise take up thy bed and go unto thy house. The paralytic arose instantly and the beholders glorified God and said, "We never saw it on this fashion."

This was Jesus' conclusive answer to his critics. The reasoning of the scribes and Pharisees had been correct. No one has power to forgive sins but God. Jesus had claimed that power and now he has vindicated his authority by working the works of God. His works were his credentials proving his authority. It was not a direct claim of divinity, but it was a condensed proof of it; and, if the beholders did not now believe on him they had no excuse. They should have believed for the very works' sake, and should have said, with Nicodemus, "No man can do the signs that thou doest except God be with him." This miracle, accompanied by the claim of authority to forgive sins, is an evidence of the divinity of Jesus Christ.

This was a definite advance on Christ's recorded teaching up to this time, and the miracle seemed more suggestive of great practical truths and Christian doctrines than any that preceded it. At the same time, this event shows the use that is to be made of human instruments



as well as of divine power. It indicates the necessity for organized Christian effort, and throws on Christians the greatest possible responsibility for the salvation of their sinful associates, and especially for the salvation of those who seem utterly paralyzed by sin. It furnishes a complete and most convincing refutation of the claim that a man can perform his whole duty as a Christian without becoming a member of any church organization. The Christian church is a divine institution for united work and worship. In the divine economy every man is his brother's keeper and, ordinarily, no man can do his whole duty to his fellow men without being associated with others both in work and worship.

## XX

### THE CALLING OF MATTHEW

Luke 5: 32. "I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

(Matthew 9: 9-17; Mark 2: 13-20; Luke 5: 27-39.)

THE evangelist John tells of Jesus calling the disciples Andrew, John, Peter, Philip and Nathanael when they were in the wilderness of Judea, where John the Baptist was preaching. The synoptic writers give an account of a second call to Peter, Andrew and John, as they were in their fishing boats on the sea of Galilee, and of a call to James, the brother of John. The synoptic writers also give an account of the call to discipleship of Matthew or Levi, the publican. The narratives differ only in the one point that Mark and Luke give the name Levi, while Matthew gives the name Matthew, and adds the despised title or epithet "publican." While there is no definite information as to the exact time when Matthew was called, there is as good reason for placing it immediately after the healing of the paralytic as there is for giving it any other place in the history of the Galilean ministry.

Matthew was the son of Alphæus, and he was a publican or tax gatherer for the Roman government. He belonged to a despised class. The terms "publican" and "sinner" were regarded as applicable to men and women who were on the same social and religious plane. There is always a tendency to regard tax as exorbitant and op-

pressive, and this tendency is greatly increased when there is taxation without representation. Galilee was a Roman province, and the government was not administered for the benefit of the governed, but was extravagant and exacted as much as possible. The gathering of revenues was in the hands of Roman knights who sought to make as much out of it as they could with safety to themselves. These knights employed subordinates, who were, as a class, notoriously harsh and unscrupulous. These facts would have been sufficient to render the office of publican very unpopular, but the Jews had additional reasons for despising tax-gatherers. As the descendants of Abraham, as Jehovah's free men, they thought it, not only hard, but religiously wrong to pay taxes that would be used to support a heathen government, and, when one of their own number became a publican, he was regarded as a traitor to his own nation.

Matthew was one of these publicans, and was collecting the kind of taxes most objected to by the people when Jesus saw him at the custom house in Capernaum, and said to him, "Follow me." We can imagine the surprise with which the Jews, and those whom Jesus already called to discipleship, heard this invitation. They could not understand why their Messiah would give a special invitation to one of this class to become his disciple. They would not be less surprised by the action of Matthew when they saw him promptly accepting the invitation, forsaking his lucrative business, and following Jesus. If they had been free from prejudice and had reasoned rightly, they would have concluded that there was something here that they did not understand, that Jesus Christ saw in Matthew something that they did not see, and that he touched some spring of personal influence that they did not recognize. Instead of reasoning in this

way and waiting for explanations, the Pharisees began to find fault, and, not long after this event, when they saw Jesus at a feast in Matthew's house, they called attention to the fact that he was eating and drinking with publicans and sinners.

It was not strange that the Pharisaic sense of propriety should be shocked by seeing a great religious teacher feasting with publicans; nor are we surprised at some of the disciples of John the Baptist objecting to what seemed so different from the manner of life of their own master, who was now languishing in Herod's prison-house. They did not understand Jesus and his mission, and they did not have true views of the character of God as their heavenly Father. Religion seemed to them to be an essentially correct, austere, respectable manner of life, and Jesus was disregarding all their ideas of respectability and propriety by making himself at home with this disreputable class as though there was no difference in men.

Their questions and objections gave Jesus an opportunity to reveal his mission and correct their misapprehensions. To the Pharisees, who thought he should not associate with publicans and sinners, he said, "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." Their objection to his mingling with sinners because they were sinners was changed into a potent reason why he should associate with them in order to help them. They certainly were neither the righteous nor the self-righteous; they were the sick; they knew they were sick, and they needed a physician. He had not come to heal these who needed no healing or who did not recognize their need. If he had come to be served and helped instead of serving and helping, he would have kept clear of these disreputable people. But he came to seek and to save the

lost and he must go to those who had wandered away. Had he come to demand sacrifice, he should not have gone to publicans and sinners, but he came to show mercy and these needed mercy. This was a complete, and convincing answer to the objections offered by the Pharisees. It showed that their objections were based on a misunderstanding as to his mission.

The Pharisees had criticized Jesus by asking his disciples why their Master ate with publicans and sinners. The disciples of John criticized the disciples of Jesus by asking Jesus why his disciples did not fast as John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees did. Jesus might have answered this question by saying, as he did in his Sermon on the Mount, that real fasting was a religious exercise. Instead of doing so he took up John's own figure which represented the Christ as the bridegroom, and said, "Can the sons of the bridechamber fast while the bridegroom is with them?.....The day will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will they fast in that day." Subsequent history shows how this illustration applied to John's own disciples and to the disciples of Jesus. The disciples of John were in deep distress because their beloved master was languishing in Herod's dungeon at Machærus, and Jesus Christ was with his disciples and they were happy, but the time would come when he would be taken away from them and their sorrow would be too deep to find adequate expression in abstinence from certain kinds of food at certain seasons. John's disciples did not know the future, and could not interpret these words of Jesus as readily as we can. Nevertheless, it is probable that our Lord said far more than is recorded, and that he made his teaching perfectly intelligible to the disciples of John.



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Having answered both classes of critics, Jesus added another statement that revealed the essential character of his kingdom, saying, "No man seweth a piece of undressed cloth on an old garment; else that which should fill up take from it, the new from the old, and a worse rent is made. And no man putteth new wine into old wine skins, else the wine will burst the skins and the wine perisheth and the skins; but they put new wine into fresh wine skins."

There may be differences of opinion as to the complete and exact application of these words, but it is evident that Jesus desired to show these objectors that the new dispensation of the kingdom of God was more than putting new cloth on the old garment of Judaism; that the fasts and formal observances of the Old Testament must not be so used as to retard and hinder the glad triumph of the New Testament. The old wine was good, and they who had drunk of it felt that they were not satisfied with the new; the old wine could be kept in the old wine skins, but there must be no attempt to confine the new wine in these old wine skins. The old wine, the old forms, would continue to have their place in the Christian church, as they revealed the source and history of the Christian church, but these old forms must not enslave the spirit of the new. The Christian church, in all ages, will enjoy the old wine as it is distilled in the prophecies, sacred songs, biographies, precepts, promises, proverbs and histories found in the Old Testament, but the Christian church is called to enter into a dispensation of greater spiritual liberty than was enjoyed under the Old Testament.

## XXI

### A FEAST AT JERUSALEM AND THE POOL OF BETHESDA

John 5: 1. "After these things there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem."

(John 5: 1-47.)

**I**N immediate connection with his account of the healing of the nobleman's son, the Evangelist John says, "After these things there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem." All our information concerning our Lord's going up to Jerusalem to attend this feast is derived from the fifth chapter of John. The Evangelist speaks of it as a feast, and the omission of the definite article might indicate that it was not so important a feast as the passover, nevertheless, there seems to be more potent objection against regarding it as any other feast, and we assume that it was a feast of the passover.

There is room for doubt as to what events in the Galilean ministry preceded this visit to Jerusalem. Ederheim places it before the sermon on the mount, the call of Matthew, and the second call of Peter, Andrew and John, while Farrar places it after all these events. If the first words of the 18th verse of the ninth chapter of Matthew are to be taken literally, we could not place it after the address that grew out of Matthew's feast and before the healing of Jairus' daughter; but there seem to

be good reasons for regarding those words as a general statement, and we place this visit immediately after Matthew's feast.

No mention is made of any of the disciples being with Jesus on this visit to Jerusalem, and it seems probable that it either occurred before the twelve were called and commissioned, or that it occurred while they were away on their first preaching tour. We adopt the theory that it occurred before the disciples had become fully recognized as permanently identified with their Master, and that this is sufficient reason for their not being mentioned.

John only mentions one miracle of Christ at Jerusalem during this feast, and that was the healing of a sick man at a pool called Bethesda, near the sheep-gate. This pool was regarded as having peculiar healing properties, and there was a legend or tradition attributing these properties to the visit of an angel who came at certain seasons and troubled the waters, so that, whosoever first stepped in was healed. The legend is not found in the oldest manuscripts but came to be interwoven with the inspired record, and is found in some of the later manuscripts as a part of the Gospel.

Amongst the number of sufferers who were waiting at the pool and hoping to be healed, Jesus saw one who had been suffering for thirty-eight years, and he said to him, "Wouldst thou be made whole?" The sick man answered in despair, "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool; but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me."

It was a pitiful but typical picture. Infirmity was dreaming of help from some miraculous intervention, but was pushed aside by the stronger fellow-sufferers until hope deferred had made the heart sick. Nor does it make the case less pitiful, or less typical, that the sickness was

the result of the man's own sin. After thirty-eight years of waiting, he felt helpless, and was well nigh hopeless. When Jesus knew that he had been a long time in this condition, and had heard his doleful account of failure to be healed, he said, "Arise, take up thy bed and walk." Instantly the paralytic was healed, and taking up his bed left the place.

This event occurred on the Sabbath day, and when the Jews saw the man carrying his bed, they said to him, "It is not lawful for thee to take up thy bed." These Jews had not been interested in the helpless, discouraged sufferer who had been spending his Sabbaths at Bethesda in the vain hope of being cured; they had not sought to free him from the sin that was making him a helpless invalid, but they would not permit him to violate any law of the Sabbath without calling him to account.

The man's answer to his accusers does not impress one favourably. He does not seem to have expressed any gratitude to his benefactor, and did not even ask his name; but, when he was accused of violating the Sabbath, he was willing to escape the odium by throwing the blame on his kind benefactor, as he said, "He that made me whole the same said unto me, take up thy bed and walk."

The brevity of the inspired record leaves some room for doubt, but this answer suggests the thought that the man who had been healed was very selfish and very ungrateful.

The next question of the Jews reveals their animus. They do not say, who is the man that made thee whole? but they say, "Who is the man that said unto thee, take up thy bed and walk?" They were not so much interested in the exercise of a supernatural power, as they were in the violation of their interpretation of the law of the

Sabbath. The man could not answer their question, for Jesus had disappeared in the crowd.

We next find the healed man in the temple. Whether he came there to give thanks or to find the one who had healed him, we do not know. It seems more reasonable to infer that he came to find the one who had healed him, and this, not because he was grateful, but because he wished to show to the Jews the man who had directed him to break the Sabbath. When Jesus saw him in the temple, he said, "Behold thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee." The man then went and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him.

It should be noted that the man does not say that it was Jesus who had bidden him take up his bed, but that it was Jesus who had made him whole. His healing evidently seemed to him more important than the command to carry his couch on the Sabbath.

There could hardly be a more complete exposition of the narrow, hostile spirit of these Jews than is found in the brief statement of the Evangelist, as he says, "For this cause did the Jews persecute Jesus because he did this thing on the Sabbath day." They fix their whole attention on the one thing that they regarded as a violation of the Sabbath, and they do not seem to have even inquired as to the genuineness of the miracle.

This miracle does not seem to have been recorded so much for its own sake as because it furnishes a setting for the teachings of Jesus that followed it. We may readily believe that it was performed in order to open the way for these teachings at this particular time and place, for, when the Jews persecuted Christ and accused him of violating the Sabbath, he did not enter into an explanation of the real nature and design of the Sab-



bath, as he did at another time, but he did proclaim to them the great truth that God was his Father, saying, "My Father worketh even until now, and I work."

To the Jews this claim seemed even worse than breaking the Sabbath day, and they sought to kill him, "because he not only brake the Sabbath, but also because he called God his own Father, making himself equal with God."

When he cleansed the temple at the preceding pass-over he said some things that appeared in a perverted form and helped to secure his condemnation when he was accused in the court of the sanhedrin, and, now, he has said something that will appear in the end to support the charge of blasphemy that was afterwards made.

Whether he was at this time summoned before the sanhedrin, or some committee of the sanhedrin, is doubtful. It seems most reasonable that the great discourse recorded in the fifth chapter of John was delivered in the temple, and in the presence of some Jewish authorities that had called Jesus to account for violating the Sabbath. Whatever the circumstances, the majesty of the discourse and the dignity of the man seem to have overawed and silenced his accusers.

In this discourse Jesus declares that the Father is still working; that he is quickening into new life a dead world; and that, in this mighty resurrection of a dead world, the Son is associated with the Father in mutual love, with equal knowledge and authority, quickening whom he will. He declares that all judgment has been committed unto the Son, and that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father. He bids them look for still greater works, assuring them that the time was coming, and even now had come, when the dead should hear the voice of the Son of God, and that as

many as heard should live. He assures them that he has the power to give eternal life to as many as hear his words and believe on the Father who had sent him; he says, also, that the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment.

These Jews were showing their zeal for mere forms, when he summons them into the conscious presence of unseen, eternal, awe-inspiring spiritual verities.

Speaking of himself, Jesus declares that he seeks nothing apart from the Father, and that he has convincing proof of his divine mission. He reminds them of the testimony that John the Baptist gave when they sent to him; he calls attention to the works that the Father had given him to do, and that he has already done amongst them, and declares that he has more convincing testimony than that of John. Then he calls attention to their own Scriptures, saying, "Ye search the Scriptures, because in them ye think ye have eternal life, and these are they which bear witness of me."

These three witnesses were testifying for him, John the Baptist, his own miracles, and the Old Testament Scriptures. If the Jews believed any one of these witnesses, they must believe on him. They professed to believe all these witnesses, and yet they rejected him. How could their unbelief be explained? Why did they not accept John's testimony? Why were they unconvinced by the conclusive testimony of his miraculous works? Why did they not find him as they searched the Scriptures that testified of him?

The reason was evident and Jesus placed his emphasis on it. Their blindness and unbelief were the result of their vanity and pride. They received honour one from

another, and did not seek the glory that cometh from God. With all their pretensions of piety, with all their zeal for the Sabbath, they were essentially worldly and sensual, and they had no real faith in God. They were boasting of Moses, and yet the law of Moses was their accuser. They were zealous for the letter of the law, but they had lost its spirit. It was their essential worldliness that was blinding their eyes and making them enemies of Christ even while they professed to have great zeal for God's law.

In this brief discourse we find Jesus Christ claiming equality with God, not only as a son of God, but as the Son of God. He made his claims so clear and definite that the Jews sought even then to kill him because he had made himself equal with God. He had revealed to Nicodemus the necessity for regeneration in order to enter into the kingdom of God, and had told him of God's love in sending forth his Son to save men; to the woman of Samaria he had revealed himself as the Messiah or the Christ; to the people of Nazareth he had declared himself the Lord's anointed, spoken of by Isaiah, but now, more definitely than ever before, he declares to the Jews, probably in the temple, that he is the divine Son of God, co-equal with the Father. His wondrous words, following the exercise of his divine power, so impress the multitude that they permit him to return to Galilee.

## XXII

### CONTROVERSY CONCERNING THE SABBATH

Luke 6: 1. "And it came to pass on a Sabbath, that he was going through the cornfields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands."

Luke 6: 6. "And it came to pass on another Sabbath that he entered into the synagogue and taught and there was a man there and his right hand was withered."

(Matthew 12: 1-21; Mark 2: 23-28; Luke 6: 1-12.)

**T**HE account given of these two events in the sacred Scriptures indicates that the Sabbath had become the ecclesiastical battle-field, and it seemed to be the one test of Jewish orthodoxy that was constantly coming to the front.

The first event is recorded by the first three evangelists, but they give no definite information as to time or place. The fourth evangelist, having reported our Lord's discourse growing out of the healing of a lame man at Bethesda on the Sabbath day, says, "After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias." Mark, having given an account of the disciples plucking the ears of corn on the Sabbath, says, "Jesus with his disciples withdrew to the sea; and a great multitude from Galilee followed; and from Judea, and from Jerusalem and from Idumea, and beyond Jordan and about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, hearing what great things he did, came unto him."

If, as we have assumed, this feast at Jerusalem, of which John speaks, was the feast of the passover, it

seems very probable that this plucking of the ears of corn, recorded by Matthew, Mark and Luke, and the healing of a withered hand on another Sabbath day, took place as Jesus was returning from the feast at Jerusalem to his home by the Sea of Galilee. His own disciples, though not mentioned as being with him at Bethesda, would probably be returning with him from the passover, and there would be other Jews from the outlying districts of Judea and from Idumea, going to their homes by the same route. It is probable, also, that the scribes and Pharisees, who had been offended at his teaching at Jerusalem, desiring to find out more about him, might follow or accompany him on his homeward journey. It is possible, too, that the inhabitants from Tyre and Sidon, who were deeply interested in his words and works, might return to their homes by this route in order to be with him on their journey. This would account for his having about him such a multitude as Mark describes.

The plucking of the ears of corn probably occurred within the limits of Judea on the first Sabbath after he left Jerusalem. The evangelist tells us "he was going on the Sabbath day through the corn fields." It seems evident that he was not traveling more than a Sabbath day's journey, for, had he done so, this would have given rise to another complaint. Jesus was not accused of violating the Sabbath himself, but his disciples took the ears of corn, or the heads of ripe wheat, and, rubbing them in their hands, separated the wheat from the chaff and ate the wheat to satisfy their hunger.

If any question should arise as to the honesty of the disciples satisfying their hunger from the fields owned by others, it is answered from the law of Moses as it says, "When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine



hand, but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbour's standing corn" (Deut. 23:25). This right being clearly defined and recognized by the Mosaic law, the only offense charged was against the law of the Sabbath. This law forbade all kinds of work which included reaping and threshing, and the rabbis had decided that plucking was reaping, and that rubbing was threshing.

The action of the disciples seemed to the Pharisees a serious violation of the law of the Sabbath. They were not satisfied with rebuking the disciples, but they came to the Master and said, "Behold, why do they on the Sabbath day that which is not lawful?" It is possible that they were moved to say this by the hope that Jesus would forbid the desecration of the Sabbath and thus relieve their consciences, but the whole narrative indicates that they did not care so much for the Sabbath, after all, as they cared to have Jesus commit himself as a Sabbath breaker. Their conduct afterwards indicates that their zeal for the Sabbath was a compound of malice and pride of opinion, rather than real piety and zeal for God.

Had Jesus Christ been only a worldly-wise and politic man, knowing as he did the extreme prejudice of the Jews, he might have constrained his disciples to endure hunger and not give offence or cause for complaint. It was a small matter, and the disciples could have easily afforded to suffer hunger and give up their liberty in order to prevent trouble. A worldly-wise man might have said to the disciples "These scribes and Pharisees are narrow and prejudiced, but the exercise of your liberty will make trouble." An astute political leader could have said this to the disciples, and could then have explained to the Jews that violation of their law of the Sabbath would not occur again. This kind of wisdom is sometimes called tact, but it has in it an element of de-

ceit that never was found in the words and acts of Jesus Christ, the perfect man. He never secured peace by the sacrifice of principle, or by introducing any element of deceit. On this occasion he frankly, boldly defended the act of his disciples. He said to the Pharisees just what he would have said about them. He called attention to what David, their great ancestor, did when he was hungry—how he did eat the shew bread which it was not lawful to eat save for the priests. Then he proclaimed the great fact that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath, and added, "The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

In saying this, Jesus assumed full responsibility for what had been done by his disciples on the Sabbath. He saw how the scribes and Pharisees had made the Sabbath a burden and he sought to correct their error. He was willing to fulfill all righteousness, but he was not willing, even by silence, to give assent to the enslaving of God's people by perverting and misapplying God's law. He proceeded, also, to show to the Pharisees that this is not a new revelation, as he says, "have ye not read in the law, how that, on the Sabbath day, the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless?" Then, having called attention to the temple services, he says, "One greater than the temple is here." . . . . "For the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath."

In all this it is evident that Jesus does not abrogate nor change the law of the Sabbath. He only condemns that false interpretation of the law that had changed a most beneficent friend of real liberty into heavy chains of slavery. He declares that the law of the Sabbath, like the whole Mosaic code, was designed and adapted to protect the weak and the poor from hard bondage and op-

pression, and that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath.

If we had no record of the healing of the withered hand in the synagogue on the Sabbath day, except what we find in Matthew and Mark, we would conclude that it had occurred on the afternoon of the Sabbath on which the disciples had plucked the ears of corn. But Luke speaks of this event as having occurred on another Sabbath, and, since the three evangelists connect it with the discussion of the Sabbath that grew out of the plucking of the ears of corn, it may be inferred that it occurred on the following Sabbath. The Sabbath having become the ecclesiastical battle-field, our Lord's enemies were watching him, and, when they saw him in the synagogue on the Sabbath day and knew there was a man in the synagogue with a withered hand, they were very alert to see what he would do.

Tradition says that this man was a stone mason. Whether this be true or not, the man needed his hand to earn a living, and his friends might have hoped that Jesus would see and heal him. No such compassionate motive, however, prompted the interest of the Pharisees. They were interested especially to see whether Jesus would break the Sabbath. Their eagerness was so great that they could not let events take their course, but called Jesus' attention by a question, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" He knew well that they were not asking for information as to what they ought to do, but to ensnare him, and he changed the form of their question before he answered it by his action. The form of the question they asked might enable them to pervert his answer, but he asked a more definite question, as he said, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath day to do good, or to do harm? to save life or to kill?" They declined to

answer. He had met them openly and frankly, defending the actions of his disciples, and declaring that the Sabbath was made for man, but they would not commit themselves to anything. Jesus gave them an excellent opportunity to declare what they regarded as permissible works on the Sabbath, but they held their peace. They were treacherously and maliciously silent.

Jesus saw with sorrow and with righteous anger the hardening of their hearts, and he answered their abstract question by an open, concrete example. He commanded the man to stand forth so that they might see the need for healing and the opportunity to do good on the Sabbath day if one had the power to heal. Then he said to the man, "Stretch forth thy hand." The man obeyed, and the Pharisees' question was answered, for Christ had again healed a man on the Sabbath day.

The animus of the Pharisees is evident when the evangelist goes on to say they were made angry even to madness by this answer to their question. Everyone of them would have saved the life of a sheep on the Sabbath, yet the healing of this man only enraged them because they knew in their hearts that Jesus knew their motive and had placed them in bad contrast because he had done good on the Sabbath and they had done evil in trying to destroy life. They were so angry that they took counsel with one another how they might kill him.

This miracle of Jesus was followed by a combination of the political with the religious rulers for his destruction. Mark says, "The Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him." Up to this time Jesus Christ had met opposition from individuals, but now he meets organized and powerful religious and political enemies,

Why the courtiers of Herod Antipas should have found fault with him for healing on the Sabbath day is not very evident. It is probable that they would not have taken the initiative in any movement against him, but they were prepared to act on the suggestion of the Pharisees. They, no doubt, associated Jesus with John the Baptist and felt toward Jesus as the Herodians felt toward John. Like John, he had let the light of truth fall on sin, and, in doing so, had incurred the enmity of all who were not willing to repent of their sins.

Never before had Jesus been followed by such a multitude as were now assembled from Judea, Jerusalem, Galilee, Idumea, the regions beyond Jordan, and from Tyre and Sidon; and never before had he faced such powerful, malicious and organized enemies. Exposed hypocrisy had joined hands with sensuality for his destruction, while multitudes afflicted with all manner of diseases were pressing upon him that they might be healed. When he reached Capernaum and the seaside it was necessary that he should have a boat to prevent the multitudes from pressing upon him while he taught them.



## XXIII

### CALLING THE TWELVE AND THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Matthew 5: 1. "And seeing the multitudes, he went up into the mountain; and when he had sat down, his disciples came unto him; and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying,"

(Mat. 5: 1; 7: 29; Mark 3: 13-19; Luke 6: 12-49. )

WHEN and where our Lord preached the great discourse reported in the gospel by Matthew, 5: 1-7: 29, no one knows, but there seem to be good reasons for believing that the time was not long after his second official visit to Jerusalem, and that the place was the mountain or elevation known as the Horns of Hattin, not far from Capernaum. While attending a feast in Jerusalem he had healed a lame man on the Sabbath day, and had been accused of violating the law of the Sabbath. In his defense he had proclaimed himself the Son of God, co-equal with the Father, and had incurred the deadly enmity of the Jewish rulers. On his return from Jerusalem, as we have assumed, the conflict had been revived by his disciples plucking and eating the ripe grain as they were passing through grain-fields on a Sabbath day, and by his healing a man who had a withered hand on another Sabbath. His teachings and his miracles had attracted great crowds, and the outcome of it all was a combination of the Pharisees with the Herodians to destroy him. He was to meet organized enemies, and it seemed a suitable time for organizing his

kingdom and giving a clear and complete statement of its spirit and its laws.

There is scarcely room for doubt that our Lord did in a single discourse proclaim the spirit of his kingdom and that Matthew gives the most complete account of this discourse, while Luke gives a less complete account of it. It is probable that neither evangelist gives anything like a complete account of all that our Lord said at this time.

Matthew introduces his report in these words, "And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain, and when he had sat down, his disciples came unto him." Luke, after speaking of the choosing of the twelve Apostles, introduces his report by saying, "And he came down with them, and stood on a level place, and a great multitude of his disciples, and a great number of the people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases; and they that were troubled with unclean spirits were healed. And all the multitude sought to touch him; for power went forth from him and healed them all."

It need hardly be said that these two evangelists were giving a description of the same event, but looking at it from a different point of observation. The key to the explanation is suggested by Luke when he first tells us that our Lord had spent the preceding night in the mountain in prayer. He had come down from a higher point to what was, in contrast with the declivity, a level place, and yet it was a part of the mountain, so that one could speak of his going up into the mountain and the other of his coming down into a level place.

Following the order indicated by the third evangelist, we may see Jesus leaving the crowd and going out into a mountain where he spent the whole night in prayer.

No attempt is made to describe the great thoughts and comprehensive plans of the Son of man as he goes forth alone to commune with the Father and gird himself for carrying out the great commission that he has received from the Father.

The hostile forces of the world and of his own nation were arrayed against him and he was about to organize his followers, His trust was in the Father, nevertheless he was using the ordinary means for the establishment of his Kingdom by organizing those who were to represent him.

Early in the morning his disciples met him, as he came down the mountain, and he chose twelve who should be called his apostles. These twelve were to be with him, and he would send them forth teaching and preaching and having authority to cast out demons. In this list we find Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew or Nathanael, and Matthew, all of whom he had called into his special service before this time. We also find Thomas, James the son of Alphæus, Simon the Zealot, Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot of whom we had not heard up to this time. We only know that this Simon was a Canaanite, that Philip was probably a Hellenistic Jew, that James and Jude were Galileans, and Judas Iscariot was a Jew.

In the estimate of the Christian Church, John and Peter are recognized as the most prominent, the one being pre-eminent for affectionate contemplation, the other being a recognized leader in practical life. The three evangelists differ slightly in their order of announcing the names of the twelve, but Peter, James and John are generally grouped together, and are recognized as the innermost circle of disciples and associates of our Lord. In the succeeding history we shall find that they were nearly

always with him. They alone were with him when he raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead, and afterwards at his transfiguration, and during his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane they were nearest.

No information is given as to why these particular men were chosen, but they were chosen at early dawn after a night spent in communion with the Father, and this fact is suggestive. Jesus knew from the beginning that one of the twelve whom he chose would betray him, and if we knew all about this one event why Judas was chosen to be one of the twelve, we would be omniscient, understanding all the mystery of divine sovereignty and human freedom. These particular men were chosen to be near the Master as he redeemed a lost world and laid the foundation for his Kingdom. Jesus said to them afterwards, "Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you that ye should go and bring forth fruit"; he said, also, "Did not I choose you the twelve, and one of you is a devil?" If anyone asks why he chose Judas when he knew that he would betray him, he might also ask why does God create any man when he knows that he will make a bad use of his life? and the answer to all such questions is, "The secret things belong to the Lord our God."

These disciples were called to the highest privileges, and their call included heavy burdens, great responsibilities and great trials as well as great opportunities. They were to follow the Christ to Calvary, to drink of the cup of which he drank, and to be baptized with his baptism. Of only one of them has it been written, "Good were it for that man if he had not been born." He had great opportunities and privileges. He had the opportunity to sit on one of the twelve thrones, judging the

twelve tribes, but he was unfaithful and his privilege became his condemnation.

At the beginning of the Mosaic dispensation of the Kingdom of God, when the children of Israel stood before Mount Sinai to receive the law of the kingdom, the mountain trembled and was covered with smoke, while thunder, as the voice of a great trumpet growing louder and louder, filled every heart with abject fear or reverential awe. The trembling multitudes besought Moses to act as their mediator, saying, "let not God speak with us lest we die."

The scene on the Mount of beatitudes presented a striking contrast. In the morning, a greater than Moses, having chosen twelve disciples from amongst his followers, is seated as their teacher on a mountain overlooking the beautiful lake of Gennesaret. He is surrounded by multitudes of people from Jerusalem, Judea and all the region of Galilee, as it stretches northward to Tyre and Sidon. They wish to hear the words of the great Teacher, and some of them hope to be healed of their diseases. Instead of being terrified by the smoke issuing from a quaking, volcanic mountain, and by the reverberations of the thunder, they see the compassionate face, they hear the kind and gentle voice of the great and loving Elder Brother, while he speaks to their hearts such words of peace as they had never heard and could never forget.

Nevertheless, there is not in this discourse the abrogation of a single precept of the law given to Moses on the tables of stone at Mount Sinai. That law was holy; it proclaimed the essential and eternal distinction between right and wrong, and the Sermon on the Mount only gives a clearer and fuller revelation of its profound meaning and universal application. Running through this



great discourse there is a demand for perfect obedience and for absolute trust. To Israel at Sinai, God said, "I am the Lord thy God who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me." In the light of the subsequent history of Christ, as we think of his death, we might hear him say, as a preface to this great discourse, "Since God is the Lord, and your Redeemer, you shall perfectly obey and trust him." This discourse shows what real obedience is, and, at the same time, reveals the source of power to obey God. It elevates the law of God above the mere letter; it lifts man above the sensual and the present into the atmosphere of the spiritual and eternal; it addresses him as the immortal child of the heavenly Father. As a religious discourse, it is unique and pre-eminent. As the sword of the Spirit, it discovers and condemns every secret sin; and, as an infinitely wise, strong and loving friend, it supplies the felt need of every hungry, thirsty immortal soul.

The Jews had been looking for a Messiah who should break every yoke of bondage and wield a scepter of universal dominion, crushing the enemies of Israel in all parts of the known world. These disciples, whom Jesus had chosen, shared this false view of the Christ and of his kingdom, and this discourse, immediately after their appointment, seemed designed and adapted to correct their errors. They had come to him, believing on him as the promised King; but they had hopes of the glory, riches and honors of a world-kingdom. In this discourse he seeks to dissipate these hopes by revealing another and very different kingdom, where the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and the persecuted are the truly blessed and the

really happy. If the disciples had caught the full meaning of this sermon, they would have known from the beginning that Christ's kingdom was not of this world, and they would have understood all that he had said to Nicodemus about the necessity for a new birth in order to see and enter into the enjoyment of the kingdom of God. The riches of poverty, the joy of mourning, the royalty of meekness, the blessedness of being persecuted for righteousness, could not be appreciated by the natural heart. The blessedness of seeing God and having the hunger and thirst of their souls satisfied was no essential part of their dreams of a Messianic kingdom, and our Lord's words must have bewildered them. They had not thought of being the salt of the earth and exerting themselves for the good of others. They had not thought of letting their light shine for anything greater and better than their own glory. It must have seemed to most of those who heard the first part of his discourse that Jesus Christ was describing something entirely different from the kingdom of which they had dreamed and for which they had hoped.

After revealing the spirit of his kingdom, Jesus spoke of his own mission and purpose as the Christ, saying, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets; I came not to destroy, but to fulfill." He declared that not one jot or tittle of the law should fail of fulfillment; but he showed, at the same time, that the scribes and the Pharisees had a very false and inadequate conception of what the law of God required. He assured his hearers that if their righteousness did not exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees they should in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. He, not only accepts the letter of the law, as it says, "Thou shalt not kill," but proclaims its profound meaning and

broad application, showing that it forbids anger, unkind and malicious thoughts as well as acts. He finds the germ of adultery in the lustful look, and demands the giving up of everything that would lead into sin though it might be as dear as a right eye or as needful as a right hand. He lifts his hearers above the sensual and the present into the atmosphere of the spiritual and eternal; he bids them look at present joys and present sorrows in the light of the eternal years, saying, "it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body go into hell." He forbids all profanity and condemns the spirit of revenge, substituting for it the spirit of self-sacrifice. He extends the law of love to enemies as well as to friends and neighbors. He warns against being satisfied with the prevalent moral code that had come down from the olden time, approving the love of friends and the hatred of enemies, and cites the example of the heavenly Father who sends sunshine and rain upon the evil and the good, upon the just and unjust. He calls upon his disciples to rise above the morality of the publicans and become perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect.

Turning to the discussion of the more distinctly religious duties, such as almsgiving, prayer and fasting, Jesus condemns the besetting sins of the Jews and of all self-righteous formalists in all ages. He shows how the purpose determines the character of the act, declaring or saying that the hypocrites give alms, not because they have real compassion for the poor, nor because they wish to lend to the Lord, but because they wish to be seen and praised of men. He condemns the selfish spirit that is back of this ostentation, saying, "when thou doest alms let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." He makes it plain that his disciples are to do good to their

fellow men, not for the purpose of being seen of men, but as an expression of love for their heavenly Father and of genuine compassion for their fellowmen. He teaches that true beneficence is the expression of love of God in the human heart and that its purest joy is found in its secret fellowship with God.

The hearts and consciences of men approve this teaching, for men know that ostentation puts upon almsgiving the stamp of selfishness, eliminating to some extent, at least, the element of loving self sacrifice. This command of Jesus does not conflict in the least with his command to let our light shine before men that God may be glorified. The end crowns the work. A man may give to the poor publicly in order to move others to give and he may be justified in doing so. This discourse only condemns the ostentation that seeks self praise.

Jesus applies the same principle to the matter of direct worship of God that he has applied to almsgiving. He does not condemn any place or attitude in prayer, but he does condemn the motive that would lead men to assume any particular attitude and frame any particular form of prayer in order that they may be seen of men and reckoned religious. He condemns the using of forms of worship for the purpose of gaining the praise of men, showing that prayer is the offering up of our desires unto God with reverence, adoration, confession and thanksgiving, that it is essentially a matter between the soul and God, and when its place, posture or form, is chosen to please men, it ceases to be prayer. He puts the stamp of his condemnation on that deceitfulness of the human heart that would lead a man to pretend to talk with God in order to be seen and heard of men. Our Lord does not condemn long prayers, for he spent whole nights in prayer; he does not condemn a special form of words,



for he taught his disciples to pray; he does not condemn prayer in the presence of others, for he prayed in the presence of his disciples, and the sacred Scriptures require public prayer; he does condemn that deadly sin of hypocrisy that would pray to God in order to have the praise of men and a reputation for piety.

Jesus puts desire for the coming of the kingdom of God at the very center of prayer. The first petition of his prayer leads up to the petition for the coming of God's kingdom. He emphasizes the necessity for exercising toward our fellow men the same spirit of forgiveness that we ask God to exercise toward us. The form of prayer that he gave to his disciples combined the expression of humble reverence with holy boldness and childlike confidence. It gives desire for the coming of the kingdom of God the first place, and places the doing of God's will above individual desires; at the same time, it asks for the good things of life, as it says, "give us this day our daily bread." It professes forgiveness toward all men. Jesus teaches that real prayer is the outgoing of the soul in communion with God; that the appropriate place is the inner chamber, where we can be alone with God.

Fasting or extraordinary religious services are neither condemned nor commended, but Jesus applies to these the same principle that he applies to other forms of special religious services. If any one wishes to fast as a religious exercise, it is not necessary that he be seen of men to fast, In this discourse the great Teacher does not condemn any outward forms, times or places of religious worship or services, but he certainly does condemn any and every outward form of religious observance that is prompted by a desire to gain the praise of men. He exposes and



condemns the most dangerous enemy of religion, and that is hypocrisy.

After discussing the forms of worship and warning against all kinds of insincerity, Jesus goes on to emphasize the necessity for dedicating the heart to God. He compares earthly with heavenly treasures and commends the heavenly as secure and imperishable; he declares that men cannot serve two masters, that they must choose between God and mammon. He calls attention to God's providential care displayed in feeding the birds and clothing the lilies, and since God cares more for men than he does for the birds or the lilies, and knows what men have need of, he adds, "be not therefore anxious, saying, 'what shall we eat? what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed?'" Then he seems to condense into one sentence the precepts and promises that run through the whole discourse, as he says, "Seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." In this one sentence he answers the question that has been discussed by philosophers in all ages and declares that this is the way to secure the highest good. Solomon had said, "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole of man"; Jesus Christ gives the same thought clearer and fuller expression when he demands perfect obedience and absolute trust. He lifts his disciples above the world, with its universal struggle for existence and the survival of the strongest, into the kingdom of God, where the highest good is attained by everyone who will trust and obey him.

Having revealed the spirit and laws of his kingdom, Jesus goes on to show how men are to seek it, saying, "Judge not that ye be not judged." Each one is to begin by examining his own life and purifying his own heart before he begins to condemn or correct the sins of others.

Harsh and censorious judgment of others must give place to such kindly charitable judgment as the consciousness of our own need of forgiveness would warrant, since each one is fixing a standard by which he will be judged when he judges others.

Great truths and great virtues seem to lie on the borderland of great errors and great vices. Jesus recognizes this when, having exhorted men to not judge others harshly, he warns them against becoming blind to the essential distinction between right and wrong, between the good and the evil in the lives of their fellowmen, as he says, "cast not your pearls before swine." While he condemns censoriousness and forbids the usurpation of the judgment seat, he would not have men fail to discriminate between good and evil. He reveals to us how we may be able to discern the right, assuring us that God is our Father, that he is more ready to give us the wisdom and strength we need than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children, adding, "every one that asketh receiveth; he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." He declares that the path of duty will become plain when we recognize God as our reconciled, forgiving and loving heavenly Father, and, as the same time, sincerely seek to do to our fellow men what we would have them do to us. He declares that no man need be confused and in doubt if he be sincere and in earnest, but the gate is strait and the way narrow, and there is need for earnest, constant strife on the part of all who seek the kingdom. He would not have any one blindly follow the leadership of others, but would have each one, using his own intelligence and conscience, judge men and their doctrine by their fruits.

Last of all, Jesus warns his disciples against trusting their privileges and professions, declaring that many,

who will say "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in thy name?" shall, in the end, be rejected. He closes with the words, "Every one therefore who heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon the rock. And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall thereof."

The multitudes who heard this discourse were astonished because Jesus taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. They had good reason for astonishment when they compared these simple, living, heart-searching, helpful words with the cold, formal, lifeless words of their religious teachers. While their religious teachers were bound by the fetters of tradition, and gave special attention to fanciful and minute distinctions, losing sight of the great truths that vitally concerned the temporal and eternal well being of men, Jesus Christ, in the simplest language, spoke directly to their hearts the very truth of God, and as in the conscious presence of God.

Multitudes in this age are not less astonished when they compare these teachings of Jesus Christ with all that is greatest and best in the philosophy or eloquence of these latter days. We do not find in all our literature any essay, sermon or poem that can be compared with this sermon on the mount. It is brief, but comprehensive, profound, but very simple—the voice of God in the language of man. As we read it we say, "never man spake like this

man." Like the love of Christ, the length and breadth and depth and height of this sermon surpass knowledge. As we read it, our hearts are searched, our motives discovered, our consciences quickened, and we stand in the conscious presence of the living God, and recognize him as our heavenly Father. On Mount Sinai, God revealed himself through Moses, as the great and righteous law-giver; on the Mount of Beatitudes, through Jesus Christ, he reveals himself as our heavenly Father.

## XXIV

### HEALING THE CENTURION'S SERVANT

Luke 7:9. "And when Jesus heard these things he marveled at him, and turned and said unto the multitude that followed, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."  
(Mat. 8: 5-13; Luke 7: 1-10.)

**M**ATTHEW tells of the cleansing of a leper in close connection with his report of the Sermon on the Mount; but there seems to be good reason for giving that miracle a different place in the history. We follow the chronological order as indicated by Luke, when he says, "After he had ended all his sayings in the ears of the people, he entered into Capernaum."

Jesus, with his disciples, went from the mount of Beatitudes directly to Capernaum. He had become well known throughout the city. Five of his disciples, and probably his own family dwelt there. He had healed the child of a Capernaum nobleman; he had healed a demoniac in the city; he had healed all manner of diseases at the home of Peter, and his fame had gone abroad so that he was the theme of conversation and the center of attraction.

There lived in Capernaum at that time a Roman centurion who was recognized as a generous friend of the Jews. He had built their synagogue and secured their good will to a remarkable degree. At his request, the elders of the Jews came to Jesus beseeching him to heal



a beloved servant who was lying at the point of death. They enforced their request by saying that the centurion was a worthy man and a good friend of their nation. Jesus heard their petition, and went with them. As he came near the centurion's house, friends came out to meet him with a message from the centurion, saying, "Lord, trouble not thyself; for I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof; wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee; but say the word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under myself soldiers; and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it." When Jesus heard this message he marvelled, and said to the multitude, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel"; and I say unto you, that many shall come from the East and the West, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast forth into utter darkness; there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth." Then Jesus said unto the centurion, "Go thy way; as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee," and when they returned to the house they found the servant healed.

The average Roman soldier was proud, cruel and tyrannical; but four Roman centurions stand out in the sacred history as noble exceptions. One of these commanded the guard when Jesus Christ was crucified, and he exclaimed, "Truly this was the Son of God"; another, named Cornelius, feared God with all his house, abounded in almsgiving, had good repute amongst the Jews, and was the first gentile convert; a third was Paul's keeper on the journey to Rome, and was a model of courtesy and kindness. No one of the four has a better record than

this one in Capernaum. As a commander of Roman soldiers, he had power to exercise tyranny and oppress a despised people, but he loved the people over whom he ruled, and showed his interest in them by building them a house of worship. He was, not only interested in, but loved this sick servant in his own household, and sought to save his life even as if he had been his own son: He was a model of humility and reverence, feeling unworthy to have Jesus Christ come into his house. He had, at the same time, a deep insight into Christ's kingdom, and knew that, since he could send his soldiers to do his bidding, Christ did not need to come into his house to issue his commands in the realms where he had all authority. In this genuine humility, combined with this insight of Christ's kingdom, our Lord saw such faith as he had not found elsewhere, even in Israel.

By this remarkable commendation Jesus teaches that the highest and holiest faith does not depend on visible, tangible evidences of the divine presence. This man's faith did not need to have Christ come under his roof. It recognized a divine power without any visible, tangible evidence. He recognized a spiritual realm in which Jesus Christ ruled as King. This centurion probably would have failed to pass a satisfactory examination in systematic theology, but he had a generous, loving, trustful heart. He trusted God and loved men, recognizing Jesus Christ as the ruler of the invisible, spiritual forces. He was a man in authority in a material kingdom, but he felt unworthy to have this supernatural Ruler of the higher, spiritual realm come under his roof. He even thought himself unworthy to come to Jesus in person and asked representatives of God's chosen people to act as intercessors for him. Our Lord, who could read the hearts of all, saw in this man greater faith than he found

in the men who had come as his representatives and greater faith than in all Israel. That was probably not the first nor the last time when humble, contrite men and women have besought ministers of the gospel and officers in the church to intercede for them, while the omniscient eye saw in their humble, contrite hearts truer, more prevailing and acceptable prayer than he heard from the lips of their intercessors.

Great faith and great humility always go together. The man who really sees God, either in his works or in his word, will be so impressed with the divine wisdom, power and goodness of his Creator that he will be filled with humility. Like this centurion, who recognized Jesus Christ as the representative of the invisible God, he will be filled with reverential awe, and will be ready to accept God's gifts with profound humility.

## XXV

### RAISING THE YOUNG MAN OF NAIN

Luke 7: 15. "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise."  
(Luke 7: 11-17.)

**S** OON after healing the centurion's servant, probably the next day, Jesus, with his disciples and a multitude of people came to a city called Nain, situated on the northern slope of little Hermon, not far from Endor. He may have sailed to the southern end of the Sea of Galilee, whence he could pass down the valley of the Jordan and, turning to the right, go up one of the ravines leading to Esdrælon, entering Nain from the northeast. Or, he may have gone overland by a nearer route, approaching the town from the north, and this route seems the more probable since a great multitude went with him.

The City of Nain has become an insignificant village of ruins occupied by a few families of ignorant, fanatical Moslems. Dr. Thompson says, "It is in striking accord with the Biblical incident in the history of Nain, that renders it dear to the Christian heart, that about the only remains of antiquity are the tombs. These are cut in the rock, and are situated on the hillside to the east of the village."

As Jesus, with his disciples and a great multitude of people, drew near to the gates of the city, he met a large funeral procession bearing the dead body of the only son of a widowed mother to one of these rock hewn tombs.

Such a scene would at any time fill the beholder with a sense of reverential awe. In the presence of our dead, we all feel that we are standing on the borderland of an unseen world. The godless, as well as the godly, feel that the mystery of death is a message from the invisible God and from another world.

In very few words Luke gives a vivid and pathetic picture of this event, when he says, "There was carried out one that was dead, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow."

Every clause of this statement was full of meaning. With the exception of the bond that unites husband and wife in Christian marriage making them one flesh and blood, none could be more tender than the one that unites a widowed mother to an only son. The sight of this widow's grief filled Jesus' heart with compassion and he said to her, "Weep not." This was in striking contrast with the ordinary formula used at funerals in Palestine, and it would have seemed like mocking grief if it had not been spoken by One who had power to help and heal the broken heart. The words of Jesus were neither mockery nor the exhortation of a stoic, for, as he said this, he touched the bier, and the bearers stood still; then, speaking to the dead, he said, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise." It was the voice of omnipotence. Life and death had met, and Life had conquered, for, "he that was dead sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother."

There are joys and sorrows that words will not express, and the evangelist does not attempt to describe the emotions of this mother as she received and embraced her son, and began to realize that he was indeed alive. Over the actions of mother and son the inspired writer throws the mantle of silence, but directs our attention to



the multitude who witnessed the miracle, as he says, "And fear took hold on all; and they glorified God, saying, a great prophet is risen among us; and God has visited his people."

If the death of this young man had suggested thoughts of God, his return to life and his victory over death had brought an overwhelming sense of the divine presence. This was only a temporal rescue of death's victim; for this man was still mortal and would, in due time, die, but in the record of this event we may catch a few notes of the prelude to that great song of triumph that Christ's own resurrection enables us to sing, as we exclaim, "O death, where is thy victory!" In the record of this event we see the dawning of the life and immortality that are brought to light in the gospel. The multitudes who witnessed the miracle could not comprehend its full significance, but it prepared the way for greater and clearer revelation of Christ's power as the life and light of men. In this event there is a prophecy of that time when he shall touch the bier on which the dead of all ages rest, and they shall come forth, not to mortal but to immortal life. If these friends at Nain could glorify God as they saw one man reprieved for a few years from the common penalty of death, who can fix an adequate measure of adoring gratitude for those who see a day when all shall rise from the dead to an immortal life. Every believer should, with Paul, count all things but loss in comparison with the power of Christ's resurrection. This event only seems important in so far as it leads up to that greater resurrection of Christ and of his people.

In the neighborhood of this city, at Endor, King Saul had sought for a message from the unseen world and, by the mystery of necromancy, had seen the form and heard the words of Samuel; but they were words of doom

for the rebellious, self-willed king. He had refused to obey God's message, that came to him from the lips of the living Samuel, and the message from the Samuel, that the wizard had summoned from the unseen world, crushed all his hopes, as it said, "to-morrow thou and thy sons shall be with me." When he heard this message, despair filled his heart, and he went forth to die on the disastrous field of Gilboa. This scene at Nain, as it brings joy out of sorrow, light out of darkness, life out of death, is in most striking contrast with that sad scene at the end of Saul's life. This widow's heart was filled with joy as she returned home with her son that had been dead and was alive. The believer may see in this event a prophecy of the general resurrection and the life everlasting.

## XXVI

### A MESSAGE FROM JOHN THE BAPTIST THE ANOINTING OF JESUS

Luke 7: 48. "Thy sins are forgiven."

Luke 7: 50. "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

(Mat. 11: 1-19; Luke 7: 18-50.)

**O**F the four evangelists, Luke alone gives any account of the raising from the dead of the widow's son of Nain and of the anointing of Jesus in the house of Simon, the Pharisee. Both Matthew and Luke tell of the coming of the disciples of John the Baptist with a message of inquiry. Luke places this event between the miracle at Nain and the anointing in the house of Simon, and, since Matthew does not tell of either the visit to Nain or of this anointing, we follow the order of events as they are recorded by Luke.

After speaking of the profound impression created by the miracle at Nain, Luke adds, "This report went forth concerning him in the whole of Judea, and all the region round about." The disciples of John the Baptist brought the report to their Master, who was, probably, at this time confined in Herod's gloomy castle in the desert north of the Dead Sea. Having heard the report, John sent two of his disciples to Jesus directing them to say "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?"

When we remember the Baptist's clear, definite and loyal testimony concerning Jesus, as he proclaimed him

the Lamb of God, and, as he afterwards reproved the jealousy of his own disciples, we are surprised that he should send such a message. Did his faith waiver, or his patience falter? Had he any real doubt as to whether Jesus was the Christ?

No man is always at his best. John had been in prison a long time and had received no message from the Master, and, when his disciples brought him reports of what Jesus had been doing for others, in a moment of weakness and impatience, he may have sent this message.

There is, however, a more consistent and reasonable explanation. These disciples needed to have their own faith confirmed and probably were sent on their own account. They had seen their master languishing in prison, and it was natural they should feel disappointed because Jesus had seemed to make no effort to secure his release. For their own sakes they needed to come into immediate contact with Jesus Christ and feel his direct power.

Either of these reasons, or the two combined, may have led John to send a message that seemed to suggest doubt or impatience. When Jesus saw the messengers and heard their question he did not answer immediately, but "in that hour he cured many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits and on many that were blind, he bestowed sight." Then he turned to John's messengers and said, "Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up; the poor have good things preached to them. And blessed is he who shall find none occasion of stumbling in me." These works of Jesus constituted his answer to John's question, and they were a sufficient answer for all who believed the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah.

How far the disciples of Jesus and the multitude, who heard the message from John, understood the exact meaning is doubtful. They were probably inclined to pity John whose popularity as a preacher had waned, and who had been almost forgotten while he lay in Herod's prison. Jesus, who was always compassionate saw some indications of this self complacent pity for what seemed to be John's weakness; and, when the messengers of John had departed, he pronounced on John a eulogy that will place his name in a very high place amongst the great Christian heroes in all time and in the eternal years. As Jesus Christ saw John, and knew him, he was not a reed shaken by every passing wind; he was not an effeminate courtier, clothed in soft raiment and loving ease; he was a prophet and more than a prophet; he was the special messenger of Jehovah, and amongst all who had been born of women there had not arisen a greater. Abraham was the father of the faithful and the friend of God; Moses talked with God; David was a man after God's own heart; Elijah stood alone on Mount Carmel as the fearless prophet of Jehovah, and Daniel stood almost alone for God in Babylon, but, in the estimate of Jesus Christ, not one of them outranked John the Baptist.

As a result of this tribute to John many of those present, including publicans and those whom John had baptized, expressed their approval, but the Pharisees and lawyers present were offended. Addressing these unbelievers, Jesus said, "Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation, and to what are they like? They are like unto children that sit in the marketplace, and call one to another; which say, "We piped unto you, and ye did not dance; we wailed, and ye did not weep. For John the Baptist is come eating no bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of man is



come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold, a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!"

After this Jesus was invited by Simon, the Pharisee, to dine with him. Where Simon lived, why he invited Jesus to be his guest and then treated him with scant courtesy, we do not know. It is evident, however, that he was no true friend, and it seems probable that he sought to emphasize his own prominence by patronizing a popular religious teacher. This proud Pharisee could condescend to invite Jesus to his table, but could, at the same time, show his lack of respect for the invited guest by supplying no water for his feet, no kiss of greeting and no oil for anointing his head.

Simon's character and motives were very different from the character and motives of Nicodemus. Nicodemus had a real and high regard for Jesus, and cherished a sincere friendship for him, but was timid, and came to him by night for fear of being reckoned his disciple. Simon neither esteemed nor loved the great Teacher, but he saw his popularity and power as a teacher and healer, and he made an outward show of friendship for one whom he really despised.

Jesus accepted Simon's invitation and, when they sat at meat in Simon's house, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus was in the house, brought an alabaster cruse of ointment, and standing behind him as he sat or reclined at the table, wept, wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair, and, kissing them, anointed them with the ointment. Where this woman came from, how her heart had been touched by our Lord, we are not told. She had probably heard Christ's teachings that day, and her heart had been touched when she thought of her own great sinfulness.

It is probable, too, that Our Lord had that day uttered with infinite and irresistible pathos those wonderful words, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your soul."

Matthew records these words in connection with his report of Christ's discourse concerning John the Baptist. If this woman heard them she could not fail to believe that they were for her. She came with a broken, contrite heart, knowing that she would not be welcomed by Simon, but longing to express her deep and loving gratitude to Jesus.

When Simon saw her he said within himself, "This man, if he were a prophet, would have perceived who and what manner of woman this is who touched him." Jesus, knowing his thoughts, showed him that he knew the heart of a proud Pharisee as well as the heart of a sinful woman. He did not at first address the woman, but, turning to his host, said, "Simon, I have something to say unto thee." Simon replied, "Master say on," Jesus said, "A certain lender had two debtors; the one owed five hundred pence and the other fifty. When they had not wherewith to pay, he forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him most?" To this question, Simon answered, "He, I suppose, to whom he forgave the most." Jesus replied, "Thou hast rightly judged"; and, turning to the woman, he said, "Simon, seest thou this woman? I entered into thy house, thou gavest me no water for my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but she wiped them with her hair. Thou gavest me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but she hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say

unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven the same loveth little." Then, speaking to the woman, he said, "Thy sins are forgiven. Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

By this, the first recorded parable of Jesus, and by its application to Simon, Jesus called the Pharisee down from the judgment seat that he had usurped, and placed him before the bar of his own conscience, laying bare his cold, hard, censorious, self-righteous, compassionless heart. By this parable he showed that Simon was more guilty in God's sight than this sinful, but penitent woman. The world does not forgive such sins as this woman had committed, and the world does not regard Simon the Pharisee as a sinner. One is disreputable and the other is respectable. God's judgment is different. In his sight both are sinners, but the penitent woman is forgiven. The woman goes out into the world, branded with the "scarlet letter" to live a life of loving self-sacrifice; and Simon the Pharisee goes out to accuse Jesus Christ of wrong doing, joining with those who sat at meat with him, as they say, "Who is this that even forgives sins?"

Had Jesus Christ been less than he was, had he been guided only by worldly wisdom, he would have rebuked the woman and gained the good will and respect of the Pharisee. But he was the Son of God, the perfect man; he came to seek and to save the lost, and to bear witness to the truth.

Of the ancient tradition that this woman was Mary of Magdala, we need not speak. The tradition seems entirely inconsistent with the inspired narrative, but no one has been able to prove conclusively that it is false, and nothing could be gained by discussing the question here. Her sins were forgiven; her faith had saved her; she could

go in peace until called to sit down as a welcome guest at the great marriage supper of the Lamb. In the record of this incident there is encouragement for every penitent sinner, and there is condemnation for all selfish, self-righteous and uncharitable judges of their fellowmen.

At the beginning of his public ministry Jesus attended a marriage feast where he performed his first miracle. By this act he, not only emphasized his interest in this divine and sacred ordinance, but indicated that in the establishing of his earthly kingdom the family should have the highest place as a social institution, and should be the real unit of both church and state. In the sermon on the Mount he lifted the seventh commandment above the mere letter and showed that it applied to every secret thought as well as to the outward act. And, now, in this, his first parable, he, not only rebukes his compassionless and censorious host, but, at the same time, puts the stamp of divine condemnation on the world's treatment of the penitent woman branded with the "scarlet letter."

## XXVII

### TEACHING AND HEALING IN GALILEE

Luke 8: 1. "And it came to pass soon afterwards that he went about through cities and villages preaching and bringing the good tidings of the Kingdom of God."

(Matthew 9: 18-34; Mark 5: 22-43; Luke 8: 1-3 and 40-56.)

**A**FTER reporting the anointing of Jesus by a penitent woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee, Luke adds a general statement that our Lord, with his twelve disciples, with the woman whom he had healed, and with many others, went through cities and villages preaching the good tidings of the kingdom of God. In the light of this general statement we see Jesus going forth from one of the cities west of the Sea of Galilee on a preaching tour that ends at Capernaum, his own city. Without taking up any of the perplexing questions concerning the exact order of events at this time, we include in this chapter the raising of the daughter of Jairus, the healing of the woman who touched Jesus on his way to the house of Jairus, the healing of two blind men and of a dumb man. The lessons taught by these miracles are not, in any way, limited by consideration of time or place, and we need not be troubled because we cannot determine the times and places.

The first three evangelists tell of the raising of the daughter of Jairus and of the healing of an invalid woman. Jairus was the ruler of a synagogue either in Capernaum or in one of the cities near the western shore of



the sea of Galilee. He may have shared the Pharisees' prejudice against Jesus, but, if he did, it was overcome by his deep anxiety for his daughter, a young girl of twelve years, who "lay dying"; and, in his deep distress, he came to Jesus, and falling down at his feet besought him to come to his house. Jesus at once followed him, but, as he was pressing his way through the crowd, a sick woman who had, for twelve years and at great expense, sought in vain for relief from physicians, and had suffered many things and had spent all her means, came behind him and touched him as he passed. She was saying in her heart, "If I but touch his garment I shall be whole." Instantly she was healed of her plague. To the surprise of his disciples, and, no doubt, to the surprise of the woman, Jesus, turning about, said, "Who touched me?" The disciples replied, "Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou who touched me?" But Jesus said, "Some one did touch me." Then the woman came trembling and falling down before him, declared in the presence of the multitude for what cause she had touched him, and how she had been healed. This timid woman had been concealing her sorrow and would have concealed her joy, but when she had made her confession, Jesus said to her, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole, go in peace, and be whole of thy plague." Her public confession brought honour to the great Physician, helped others and brought great joy to her own heart.

During the delay caused by this event, messengers came from the house of Jairus, saying, "Thy daughter is dead; why troublest thou the Master any further?" But what Jairus had seen in the healing of this woman led him to hope even against hope, and he said, "My daughter is even now dead; but come and lay thy hands upon her and she shall live." Jesus, who had heard the dishearten-

ing message from Jairus' house, said to him, "Fear not, only believe." Faith had healed the suffering woman, and this father's faith could conquer death.

When Jesus came to the house he took with him only Peter, James and John and the father and mother of the maiden. To the weeping friends, he said, "Weep not, the child is not dead, but sleeping." When they laughed in scornful contempt, he took the child by the hand, saying, "Maiden arise." Immediately the girl arose and walked. Then Jesus directed the amazed parents to give her something to eat, commanding them also to tell no man what he had done.

The command to not publish abroad this and other miracles was probably designed to prevent the people from placing too much emphasis on the miracle and overlooking what was more important. Many of those who were healed, moved by personal vanity, would place too much emphasis on the miracle losing sight of the great mission of the Son of God as the Saviour of men. His miracles were convincing credentials attesting his divine mission and authority, and they revealed his compassion for suffering humanity, but they were only the credentials and not the essentials of his work as the Christ. His great purposes of love looked beyond these temporal blessings that he was dispensing so generously and so tenderly. He came to open the eyes of faith that men might see God as their heavenly Father.

"As Jesus passed by from thence two blind men followed him, crying, Have mercy on us, thou son of David, and when he was come into the house the blind men came to him." Jesus said to them, "Believe ye that I am able to do this," and when they said, "Yea, Lord," he touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it unto you." Immediately their eyes were opened.

No information is given as to the time or place of this miracle. The only thing to be particularly noticed about it is the important part assigned to the faith of these men. Their faith was the condition of their being healed. Their faith had been indicated by their coming to Jesus, following him and crying for help; but he also asked of them a definite profession of belief in his ability to heal, and then said, "Be it unto you according to your faith."

In immediate connection with his account of the healing of these blind men who came to Jesus in the house, Matthew says, "As they went forth there was brought unto him a dumb man possessed with a demon." The demon was exorcised and the dumb man spake, and the multitudes marvelled, saying, "It was never so seen in Israel." But the Pharisees took exception, and said, "By the prince of the demons casteth he out demons:" It is probable that the Pharisees did not say this publicly at this time, but whispered it among themselves and afterwards said it publicly.

When the evangelists describe the emotions of Jesus as he looked on sinning, suffering humanity, they use the word "compassion," and that word is well adapted to describe the great motive power of the Christian church. Nevertheless, the preëminent word in the New Testament is the word "faith." Faith forms the vital link between the sinner and his Saviour. Three of these miracles seem to be especially designed to emphasize the importance of faith. The woman who was healed had shown her faith by touching the border of Jesus' cloak, and when she had made her confession, Jesus said to her, "Thy faith hath made thee whole. Go in peace. When Jairus said "My daughter is even now dead; but come and lay thy hands on her and she shall live," Jesus said, "Fear not, only believe." Faith was the great essential. When the blind

men had shown their faith by following Jesus and crying out "Have mercy on us," Jesus said, "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" and when they said, "Yes, Lord," Jesus said, "According to your faith be it unto you." Faith is the instrument, channel and essential condition of the exercise of saving power.

"More things are wrought by prayer  
Than this world dreams. Wherefore let thy voice  
Rise like a fountain for me night and day;  
For what are men better than sheep and goats  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer  
Both for themselves and those who call them friend.  
For so the whole round world is every way  
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

## XXVIII

### TEACHING BY PARABLES

Matthew 13: 3. "And he spake to them many things in parables."

(Mat. 13: 1-52; Mark 4: 1-34; Luke 8: 4-18.)

**J**ESUS, with his disciples, had returned to Capernaum and resumed his teachings by the seaside on a day that was to mark a new epoch in the development of his kingdom. He came forth from the house, probably early in the morning, and sat by the sea and taught the people that had gathered about him. The crowd increased until it became necessary for him to get into a boat and speak to the people as they stood on the beach.

Three evangelists give reports of this day's teaching, and they all say that he taught by parables, and that the change in manner of teaching was so marked that it led the disciples to ask why he spake in parables. With the exception of the parable of the debtor in the house of Simon the Pharisee, Jesus had used no parables until this time. In the Sermon on the Mount he had revealed the spirit and aim of the Messianic kingdom in very simple and direct language, but this discourse is made up of parables and of what seemed, even to the disciples, dark sayings.

When the disciples asked their Master why he spake in parables he replied, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given. Therefore speak I to them in parable; be-



cause seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And unto them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith,

“By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand,  
And seeing ye shall see, and in no wise perceive;  
For this people’s heart is waxed gross,  
And their ears are dull of hearing,  
And their eyes they have closed,  
Lest haply they should perceive with their eyes,  
And hear with their ears,  
And understand with their hearts,  
And should turn,  
And I should heal them.”

Jesus’ miracles and teaching had attracted and favorably impressed the people, but they had also developed and crystalized opposition on the part of scribes, Pharisees and Jewish religious teachers. These religious teachers could not deny the miracles, but they began to suggest to the people that Jesus was in league with the powers of evil, and that he cast out demons by the prince of the demons. It was not possible to reach these hard hearts by direct statements concerning the kingdom of God; therefore, the great Teacher spoke to them in parables, as Isaiah had predicted, when he said, “I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden from the foundations of the world.”

It might not be amiss to remind the reader of the difference between parables and fables. The fable, like the parable, seeks to throw light on the unknown by means of the known, but, while the fable uses similitudes that are not within the range of ordinary possibility, representing trees and animals as talking like men, the parable takes similitudes from the ordinary experiences and observations of life. There are very few fables in the sacred

Scriptures, but there is one in the Old Testament, in the address of Jotham to the men of Shechem. (Judges 9: 6-15.)

Parables are adapted to carry wholesome, but unwelcome truths into prejudiced minds that would exclude direct statement; and men find themselves committed to a judgment or course of action before selfishness or prejudice can organize resistance, as in the case of Nathan's parable to king David. It was the unreceptiveness on the part of his hearers that led Christ to use so many parables. Many of them were so blinded by prejudice that they would not listen to a direct proclamation of the truth, and the parabolic method was adopted in order to meet their unreceptiveness. This reason for their use does not exclude other reasons.

The advantage of teaching by parables or by any kind of illustrations, is greatest when the teacher's knowledge is vastly superior to that of the learner. This fact renders the parables of Christ unique. He knew perfectly the great spiritual realm of which his disciples were very ignorant, and he could take the events and observations of every day life and give to his disciples some conception of what their eyes had not seen. He had come from God and testified in regard to things of which he had perfect knowledge.

The Jews were accustomed to teach by parables, but their parables differed from the parables of Christ in that they sought to throw earthly light on heavenly things, while He sought to throw heavenly light on earthly things. The Jewish teacher applied sensual, temporal limits and measures to spiritual, eternal verities, while Christ lifted the sensual and the temporal up into the bright light of the spiritual and eternal. Jewish teachers, by their parables, sought to bring God down to the level of men, while

Christ sought to lift men up into the knowledge and fellowship of God. Jewish parables would broaden and etherealize human selfishness, but Christ's parables revealed divine compassion, and sought to make men partakers of the divine nature. In brief, the parables of Christ were designed and adapted to reveal to men the spiritual, eternal kingdom of God. Christ's kingdom was not of this world and his parables were designed and adapted to illumine the things that are in this world, so that they might become types and shadows of spiritual things.

While all our Lord's parables are designed and adapted to reveal some phase or characteristic of the kingdom of God, they seem to fall into classes or series that correspond with the different stages in the development of Jewish opposition. The first series, comprising seven or eight parables, exhibit the elementary truths that concern the establishment of the kingdom; the second series, comprising about fifteen parables, have in them a controversial element not found in the first; and, in the third series, comprising eight parables, the judicial element predominates and the evangelical disappears.

The first series of parables are reported in the thirteenth chapter of the gospel by Matthew, and partially reported also by Mark and Luke. Some of them were addressed to the multitude by the seaside and afterwards explained privately to the disciples; others seem to have been addressed only to the twelve disciples. They are all evangelical, and, though spoken after the opposition had assumed a malignant form, they do not seem to be controversial.

The first great parable is that of the sower. In it a man sows seeds, some of which falls by the wayside and is devoured by birds, some in rocky places, where it

springs up but soon withers; some falls amongst thorns and is choked, and some falls on good ground yielding an abundant harvest. As we read this parable, we may see Jesus sitting in the prow of the boat, speaking to a great multitude of people as they stand on the beach. He was probably in full view of a field where such scenes as he described were enacted every season. It is possible that he was looking on just such a scene as his words present when he said, "Behold, the sower went forth to sow."

This parable seems very plain to us who have heard its explanation, and we can see clearly how it reveals the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but it seemed to those who first heard it very obscure and incomprehensible. They would ask what this sowing and growing had to do with the establishment of the kingdom of God and the enthroning of the Son of David. When they attempted to analyze the parable they did not recognize either the sower or the seed, and how could they know what was meant by the stony, thorny, exposed and good ground, or the abundant harvest? Their knowledge of the kingdom of God was not sufficient to enable them to understand the parable of the great Teacher. Nevertheless, there was something to interest all hearers and to suggest inquiry; and, when the disciples asked and received an explanation, the parable, instead of hindering them, helped them to understand the mystery of the kingdom. Some seed fell by the wayside that day, some in thorny places, some on stony ground, but some also on good ground. Christ's hearers belonged to two classes, believers in his divine mission and authority, and unbelievers, who attributed his miracles to demoniacal power. To those who believed in him the parables were a revelation of the mystery of the kingdom; to those whose eyes were blinded by

unbelief the parables were the dark sayings of Isaiah's prophecy.

This great parable reveals God's method of establishing his kingdom in the world. There can be no harvest without the sowing of the seed; but the good seed may fail to yield because it falls where it will become the food of birds, or because it falls among thorns, or in stony ground. The soil does not produce without the seed, and the seed may fail for lack of good soil. The kingdom of God does not spring up in any heart without the good seed of the word; and the good seed of truth may fall into hearts where it is not appreciated and the evil one snatches it away; or it may fall into hearts so filled with the pleasures of this world that it will be choked; or, it may fall into hearts with so little spiritual soil that permanent, mature growth is impossible. The words with which the parable close, as we find them recorded in the gospel by Mark, seem to be the echo of the parable as well as the words of the great Teacher. From the parable, as well as from the lips of the Master, come the words, "Take heed how ye hear."

Whether the parable, recorded only by Mark, concerning the unobserved growth of the seed was spoken to the multitude, or only to the disciples and at another time, we do not know. It seems to follow the parable of the sower very closely and very naturally. The parable of the sower shows how the seed of the kingdom is cast into the soil, and this parable shows how it silently and unobserved, develops, bearing, first the blade, then the ear, then the full wheat ready for the harvest. The establishing of Christ's kingdom includes patient waiting as well as activity in sowing the seed. There are laws of development in the spiritual as well as in the material world. There is seed time and there is time for growth, and we



must await the harvest. During this time the sower leaves the seed to develop according to the laws of seed and soil, dependant on the sunshine and the showers.

It may be questioned whether all the parables grouped together in the thirteenth chapter of the Gospel by Matthew were spoken on one day, or, as Mark seems to suggest, at different times "as they were able to hear them." Farrar says that so many parables at one time would have bewildered the multitude. But the same may be said of that great discourse concerning the kingdom, that is called the Sermon on the Mount. In view of what we know of Christ's usual method of teaching, and of the intimate connection of these parables, it seems most probable that the parables of the sower, of the tares, of the mustard seed and of the leaven, were addressed to the multitude as Christ sat in the boat and the people stood on the beach; and that, on the afternoon of the same day, "in the house," the parable of the growth of the seed, as reported by Mark, and the parables of the hidden treasure, of the goodly pearl, and of the net were spoken to the disciples. There is evident progress in the parables. In the first we see the sower, in the second the growth, in the third another kind of seed, and, in the fourth, the vast expansion from the very small beginnings of the kingdom.

In the first parable there is only one kind of seed, but different soils. In the second, reported by Matthew, there are two kinds of seed, good and bad, for "the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went away."

This picture is said to be true to nature, or facts of observation since such deeds of enmity are common in the eastern country.

Had the Jews been intelligent students of their own Scriptures, they would have been able to interpret this parable, for the story of the falsehood of Satan in Eden is found in the outline of this picture. God had sown the good seed of truth in the heart of man, but Satan came and sowed falsehood, and the kingdom of God and the enemies of the kingdom have grown together from this sowing in every succeeding generation. Nevertheless, this parable seemed, even to the disciples, the most obscure, and they asked especially about its meaning and received from their Master this explanation: "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; and the field is the world; and the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; and the enemy that sowed them is the devil; and the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels."

The Jews had accused Jesus of acting in league with the evil one and this parable, while it is not controversial in form, refutes that absurd theory as it reveals the definite and irrepressible conflict between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness, and predicts the final separation of the children of the kingdom from the enemies of the kingdom. Good and bad are growing together in this world, but in the harvest time the Son of man will send forth his angels to gather out of his kingdom whatsoever causes stumbling or does iniquity, and will cast them into the furnace of fire, leaving the righteous to "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of the Father."

In explaining this parable, our Lord was careful to say that the field was the world. It does not, therefore, forbid the spiritual disciplining of the children of the kingdom by the visible church and the exclusion of false professors from the visible church. It does condemn every

attempt to make an unmixed kingdom in this world by destroying the tares before the end of the world. The tares and the wheat have been sown together and they must be left to grow together until the time comes to garner the wheat and burn the tares.

The mystery of sin is not explained in this parable; but it is clearly recognized and the entrance of sin into this world is attributed to the devil who sowed bad seed in God's world. This parable is a miniature picture of the world's history as it may be traced in the Bible. There are two sowers, God and the evil one; there are two kinds of seed, true and false, and they are sown in the same world, where they grow together and cannot be wholly separated. But the time is coming when the works of the evil one will be destroyed and the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of the Father. This parable is a call for patient, cheerful, hopeful waiting.

The first parables exhibited the establishing of the kingdom of God in this world as the sowing, growing and intermingling of good and bad seed, while the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven exhibit the establishing of the kingdom as a development of great power from very small beginnings. As the mustard seed, one of the small seeds planted in the garden, becomes the greatest of garden herbs, so the little seed of the kingdom is destined to become the greatest power in the world. This was as dark a saying as the words that afterwards puzzled the Jews when Christ said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to me." So too, the little leaven, leavening the three measures of meal, was an apt illustration of the mighty, silent and expansive force of the seed of Christ's kingdom. It is very easy for us, who have witnessed the growth of the

kingdom, to see the beauty and aptness of these parables ; but, when they were first uttered, they seemed so incomprehensible that even the disciples did not so grasp them as to intelligently inquire concerning their meaning.

It is hardly necessary to remark that, while both these parables illustrate the growth of the kingdom from small beginnings, the parable of the mustard seed seems peculiarly adapted to exhibit the marvelous expansion of the seed of the kingdom, while that of the leaven exhibits its transforming power. Both work silently and mightily, but each in its own way. The kingdom of God is to fill the whole earth and shelter all nations, and leaven with the leaven of righteousness all who come under its influence.

If, as we have assumed, these parables were spoken to the multitude by the seaside in the forenoon, we may now see Jesus dismissing the multitude and going with the disciples "into the house" at Capernaum where he explained the parables of the sower and of the tares and then added the parable of the hidden treasure and of the net let down into the sea.

The parables of the treasure and of the pearl were adapted to impress upon the disciples the necessity for seeking and appropriating the kingdom. It was to be so valued that a man would rejoice in its discovery, and be willing to sell all his possessions in order to buy it. This parable shows that the kingdom of God is only for those who are willing to make such sacrifices for it as the pearl seeker makes for a pearl of great price.

The parable of the net warned the disciples against trusting to the mere fact that they were disciples. The net let down into the world would gather good and bad, but there would come a time of separation. The kingdom of Christ now in the world comprises more than

four hundred million nominal Christians but these are only the gross contents of the net, including the good and the bad.

This was a great day in the history of our Lord's teaching. These parables did not astonish and excite the multitude who heard them so much as did some of his mighty works, but we may safely say that they exerted more influence on the world. Christians, living in this age, see Christ's miracles as events that occurred far away in the dim vista of the past; but these parables seem as fresh and appropriate as if they were spoken for the first time in our own age. They increase in aptness and become more luminous as they come to each succeeding generation. They seem to have been spoken for and to us rather than for and to the men and women who walked by Galilee nearly nineteen hundred years ago.



## XXIX

### THE MOTHER AND BRETHREN OF JESUS

Matthew 12:50. "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister and mother."

(Mat. 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21.)

THE first three evangelists tell of the mother and brethren of our Lord seeking to see him, and that they could not come to him on account of the crowd. Their accounts of what occurred do not differ essentially, but each one differs from the other two by giving the event a different place in the narrative. In view of the uncertainty as to time and place, we study it in immediate connection with our Lord's first teaching by parables at Capernaum.

When the mother and brethren of Jesus sought to speak to him they could not because of the multitude and a message was sent to him through the crowd. When it reached the inner circle some one interrupted the discourse, saying to Jesus, "Thy mother and thy brethren stand without seeking to speak to thee." When Jesus heard this message, instead of sending back some reply, or asking the crowd to give way, he said to the multitude, "Who is my mother and my brethren?" and, as he looked around on those who sat near him, he added, "Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and sister and mother."

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These words must have surprised the multitude who first heard them, and they surprise the average reader when he reads them for the first time. When one thinks of Jesus' tender regard for his mother, and remembers that he remained at Nazareth subject to his parents until he was thirty years old, these words, spoken in such circumstances, are a surprise. Why did he treat his mother and his brethren in this way?

If Mark refers to the same event when he says, in a different connection, that the friends of Jesus thought he was mad and sought to lay hands on him, we can easily understand his words and acts toward them. If the Pharisees had succeeded in so misleading the minds of his mother and his brethren that they had come to try to force him to give up his work, the answer of Jesus needs no explanation. There is doubt, however, as to whether Mark, in this part of his narrative refers to the same event, and such an explanation is not needed. In the temple, when Jesus was only twelve years old, he said to his mother, "How is it ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" On another occasion he said to her again, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." When she comes now, he is doing the work that his heavenly Father has sent him into this world to do, and he must not let even his mother and his brethren interfere with that work. In his answer, he recognizes ties of relationship that were more important than those of nature, since whosoever would do the will of the Father was his mother, sister and brother—his nearest and dearest kindred. He placed the conditions of discipleship on a high plane, when he said, "he that loveth father, mother, son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me," and he recognized the same principle here by his own conduct

toward his mother. He was a most loving son, and remembered his mother when he was suffering the awful agony of crucifixion, but even a mother must not come between him and his service of the heavenly Father. No accident of birth, nor ties of human friendship, no merely human sentiment must be allowed to interfere with his duty toward God the Father.

Believers in Christ as the Son of God will always regard the mother of our Lord as the most highly honoured of all women, and yet she was only human—not divine. Her divine Son must do the will of his heavenly Father rather than her will. In view of the false teachings and sentimentality that have prevailed in the Christian church, this event is profoundly significant. It puts the stamp of Scriptural condemnation on superstitions that have led to the idolatrous worship of the virgin Mary. Whosoever is born of the Spirit of God, and does the will of the Father as a true disciple, is more vitally united to the Christ than any one can be by any ties of kinship that are merely natural. Duty to home and country must not interfere with duty to God, and love for home and country is only pure and ennobling when it springs out of and is sanctified by the love of God. The followers of Christ have some times been compelled to leave father and mother in order to serve God, and, when they did so, they were following in the footsteps of the Master. He was born of a woman, but he was the Son of God, and his great work of saving a lost world always had the first place.

### XXX

## CHRIST STILLING THE STORM ON GALILEE

and

## HEALING A DEMONIAK

Mark 4: 29. "And he awoke, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased and there was a great calm."

Mat. 8: 34. "And when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart from their borders."

(Mat. 8: 18, 23-24; Mark 4: 35; 5: 20; Luke 8: 32-39.)

**O**N the evening of a busy day in Capernaum, Jesus said to his disciples, "Let us go over unto the other side." Without making any special preparations the disciples obeyed, and, with the Master in a boat, they launched out across the sea. They were accompanied by a part of the multitude in other boats, who probably, when they saw indications of a coming storm, turned back. The distance was only six or eight miles, but Jesus was tired, and had fallen asleep on a cushion in the stern of the boat when suddenly a great storm arose and the waves swept over the vessel. The disciples were fishermen, and had been out in many a storm on this lake, but this one so terrified them that they awoke their Master, saying, "Save Lord; we perish." All were terror stricken, and each one uttered his own cry of alarm or despair. To their varied exclamations

Jesus replied, "Why are ye so fearful, O ye of little faith?" He did not reprove them for lack of courage or skill, for they had probably done all that human skill could do, but he did rebuke them for lack of faith. Then he arose and spoke to the winds and the sea, saying "Peace, be still." At his word the winds ceased and there was a great calm.

These disciples had seen their Master healing diseases, and they may have hoped that he could save them from destruction by winds and waves, but they were awe stricken when they saw the sudden calm, and said, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?" Was it any wonder? Only a moment ago, weary, unconscious of the winds and the waves, he lay asleep in the boat, but now he has risen, and, in his majesty as Lord of wind and wave, he speaks the word and his servants obey him.

We do not depend on this great miracle as our evidence of Christ's divinity, for we do not see with our own eyes and hear with our own ears what the disciples saw and heard, and reports of this event are so brief that the skeptic might suggest explanations that do not involve the supernatural. Nevertheless, this experience was adapted to confirm the faith of the disciples and increase their respect and reverence for their Master. Any one who accepts the whole scheme of redemption, as it is revealed in the sacred Scriptures, will find no difficulty in accepting the simple story of this event as it is recorded by the evangelists. It is just what might be expected of the incarnate Son of God. It is altogether consistent with what the Bible teaches as to his perfect humanity and his perfect divinity. He could sleep unconscious of the raging winds and waves that seemed to threaten instant destruction; and he could awake and



say to wind and wave, "Peace, be still." In him was the same power that had parted the waters of the Red Sea to save Israel; in him was the same power that parted the waters of the Jordan when the feet of the priests, bearing the ark, touched the water; in him was the same power that stilled the stormy Mediterranean when the disobedient Jonah was cast out of the ship; in him was the divine power of God that controls through natural law or independently of natural law all the forces of nature for the accomplishment of his own will.

To us the miracle is a parable hardly less luminous and instructive than the parables spoken at Capernaum. When storms and tempests are abroad on the sea of our lives there is One to whom we can turn, and when he speaks there will be peace and safety. If Christ be with us and for us, no power can hurt us.

"No storm can wreck the ship where lies  
The Master of ocean, earth and skies."

The words of the Master, "Where is your faith?" were not only for the little company of frightened disciples in that boat on Galilee, but for every anxious, terrified Christian in every age. The echo of these words has been heard for nineteen centuries and will be heard until all God's people realize his protecting power so that they can sing, amid clouds, darkness and tempests,

"God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform;  
He plants his footsteps in the sea,  
And rides upon the storm."

After stilling the storm Jesus and his disciples came to the eastern shore of the lake, landing, probably at a place

that is now called Kersa. Matthew speaks of it as "the country of the Gadarenes," while Mark and Luke call it "the country of the Gerasenes. They did not land at either Gadara or Gerasa, for these cities are several miles from the lake. The geographical boundaries were not very definite and the same region of country might very easily be designated as the land of the Gadarenes or the land of the Gerasenes; but there is hardly room for difference of opinion as to the exact place of landing, since there is only one place on the eastern shore that answers to the description of what took place after the landing, and that one place is Kersa.

The distance from Capernaum to Kersa or Gersa was not more than six or eight miles, and, after making reasonable allowance for delay on account of the storm, the passage would only require three or four hours,' so that Jesus and his disciples probably landed on the eastern shore before midnight. It is possible, of course, that they may have spent the whole night in the boat. All the evangelists tell what took place after the landing, but Mark speaks of it as occurring as soon as they had landed, for he says, "When he was come out of the boat *straightway* there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit."

On the other side of the sea Jesus had been teaching the multitudes by parables; on the sea, the disciples had witnessed a miracle that was an acted parable, suggesting the Master's power to still the storms of life and give peace and safety to storm-tossed souls; and, now, on the eastern shore, they find a most miserable specimen of human unrest, a demonized man. This miserable demoniac had his dwelling in the tombs or caves, and was a terror to the neighborhood. He had such muscular strength that he could not be bound with fetters and

chains; but was in the mountains day and night, moaning and cutting himself with stones. Language would fail to describe a more wretched specimen of humanity than the man who, seeing Jesus at this time, cried with a loud voice, "What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God?"

Matthew tells us of two demoniacs, while Mark and Luke only speak of one. The probable explanation is that one may have been so much more terrible than the other as to be singled out by Mark and Luke while his companion is mentioned also by Matthew who was an eye witness of the event.

Ordinary insanity appeals to our compassion more strongly than mere physical suffering, but this was worse than ordinary insanity. A hostile power possessed this man's soul, dominated his will, drove him into the tombs and the mountains, while, at times, his real or better nature seemed to struggle for supremacy and he gave vent to doleful cries of anguish that brought horror and terror to the hearts of all who heard them.

When he saw Jesus there seemed to be a fierce conflict of two powers, the man and the demon. The maniac prostrated himself at Jesus' feet, but, when Jesus commanded the evil spirit to come out of the man, the demons cried, "What have we to do with thee, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to destroy us before the time?" Then, when Jesus said, "What is thy name?" the reply was, "My name is Legion, for we are many."

This strange record suggests many questions that cannot be answered. What is meant by the demoniac's answer that six thousand demons possessed him? Was this the answer of the demonized man or of the demons? It need only be said that there are more things in heaven and earth than can be explained or understood by men,

and it is just as irrational to attempt to explain this event as it would be to deny it merely because we cannot explain it. We may believe, however, that this answer was the answer of the demons rather than the answer of the man, for they besought Jesus to not send them out of the country but to send them into a herd of some two thousand swine that were feeding on the mountain side. This request was granted, and, when the demons left the man and entered the swine, the whole herd rushed madly down the declivity and, plunging into the sea, were drowned.

The questions that have been asked as to why Jesus permitted these demons to enter the swine and cause their destruction are no harder to answer than questions as to why God permits any plague to destroy cattle. When such questions arise, we can only say that the secret things belong to God and all the mysteries of sin and suffering he has not yet revealed. We shall find, however, in the outcome of this event what would seem an adequate reason for permitting the destruction of this herd of swine without connecting it with the Mosaic law against using the flesh of swine for food.

When the swineherds saw what had been done, they fled and told it in the city and in all the adjoining country, and very soon the whole city came out to see Jesus. Luke says there were "holden with a great fear." This fear was not the fear of reverential awe and of gratitude to one who had delivered a demonized brother, whom they found clothed and in his right mind, for they besought Jesus to depart out of their borders. They set a higher value on their swine than on their brother man. Their fear may not have been altogether selfish and mercenary, but if there had been only the healing of the demoniac it is not probable that they would have asked

Jesus to depart from their borders. Were they then selfish above all others? Were they worse than the men now living in Christian lands who would demonize and destroy their fellow men in order to increase their own wealth? No. Every man, who engages in any business that can only prosper by the degradation and destruction of his fellow men, is at heart a Gadarene. Every man who seeks to secure wealth by any business or by any business methods that destroy manhood would exclude Christ, for he came that men might have more abundant life.

But there is a brighter side to this dark and distressing picture. When Jesus was about to depart, the man who had been rescued from the power of the demon besought him to let him go with him. He at least appreciated his deliverance and would show his gratitude. But Jesus said, "Go to thy home, unto thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee." The man obeyed and began to publish it throughout Decapolis. This is the one bright spot in this wild, weird, distressing picture. The coming of Jesus was not in vain; he had healed a demoniac, and the Gadarenes or Gerasenes were not left without an evangelist. It may be, too, that the loss of the herd of swine would constrain some of them to hear the gospel, who could not have been interested in any other way.



## XXXI

### THE SENDING FORTH OF THE APOSTLES

Mat. 10: 1. "And he called unto him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of diseases and all manner of sickness."

(Mat. 9: 35; 10: 42; Mark 6: 7-11; Luke 9: 1-5.)

**A**FTER telling of the healing of the demoniac on the eastern shore of the sea, and of the request of the Gadarenes that Jesus would depart from their borders, Matthew goes on to say, "He entered into a boat and crossed over and came into his own city." Then, in immediate connection, he tells of the healing of the paralytic, of the calling of Matthew and of Matthew's feast, of the coming of John's disciples and of the healing of the daughter of Jairus. Mark and Luke connect this healing of Jairus' daughter directly with our Lord's return from Jerusalem. In view of this difference of chronological order on the part of the evangelists, and for reasons given elsewhere, we have placed all these events prior to the healing of the Gadarene demoniac, and we now enter on the study of our Lord's third circuit of Galilee, when he "went about all the cities and villages teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manners of diseases and all manner of sickness."

Before Jesus had crossed the lake to Gadara the crowds that came to his preaching were so great and so dense that his mother and brethren could not get near enough

to speak to him, and, when he returned, great multitudes met him. Reports of his calming the storm and healing the Gadarene demoniac extended and intensified the public interest, so that visitors came from all parts of Palestine. Some of these visitors were attracted by morbid curiosity, some by the hope that their diseases might be healed, some by selfish ambition, some by envy and hatred, and some by a sense of spiritual need and religious reverence. As Jesus looked on this great, heterogeneous multitude he was "moved with compassion because they were distressed and scattered as sheep not having a shepherd." At Sychar he had called the attention of the disciples to the great spiritual harvest that was ripe and ready to be gathered; now he says, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he send forth labourers into his harvest."

After this he called the twelve disciples to him and sent them out into this harvest field, giving them authority over unclean spirits to cast them out, and to heal all manner of diseases and all manner of sickness.

This marked a new epoch in the progress of Christ's kingdom. When he was baptized and began his work, he called five disciples. When he met organized opposition he called twelve disciples, and in the Sermon on the Mount revealed the principles, laws and spirit of his kingdom. When pride, envy, jealousy and prejudice had so blinded the eyes and hardened the hearts of the Jewish leaders that they would not receive direct teaching, he began teaching by parables the deeper things of the kingdom. Up to the present, however, he has done all the preaching, teaching and healing, and his disciples merely went with him; now the multitudes have so increased, that he cannot reach them all in person and he

meets the new conditions by sending out the twelve as his representatives.

Whether the entire discourse recorded in the tenth chapter of Matthew was spoken at the time of sending out of the twelve may be questioned. Matthew's usual method of grouping subjects might lead to the conclusion that he had gathered into one discourse many things that had been said at different times. It is reasonable to suppose that Jesus, knowing he was about to send out these disciples to speak and act as his representatives, would talk of their work whenever he had an opportunity. On the other hand, the first verse of the eleventh chapter of Matthew seems to affirm that all of these things were said to the disciples at the time when they were formally commissioned to go forth, and we are inclined to believe that this discourse, like the Sermon on the Mount, was spoken at one time, as Matthew records it.

In the first part of the address, verses five to fifteen, Jesus gave direct and special instructions to the disciples as they went on this particular mission to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He said, "Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils: freely ye received, freely give. Get you no gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses; no wallet for your journey, neither two coats, nor shoes, nor staff: for the labourer is worthy of his food. And into whatsoever city or village ye shall enter, search out who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go forth. And as ye enter into the house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And

whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, as ye go forth out of that house or that city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city."

Some of these special instructions and limitations were only for that particular mission, for the limitations were removed and different instructions were given afterwards when he sent out the seventy. The general principles, however, on which these instructions were based are for all who, in any way, in any age or place, go forth as the representatives of Jesus Christ.

In the second part of the discourse, verses 16 to 23, Jesus gave directions that the apostles would need when they preached to the Gentiles immediately after his departure out of the world. He said, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to councils, and in their synagogues they will scourge you; yea and before governors and kings shall ye be brought for my sake, for a testimony to them and to the gentiles. But when they deliver you up, be not anxious how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you. And brother shall deliver up brother to death, and the father his child: and children shall rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, flee into the next: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come."

While this part of the discourse contains principles and directions that are for the representatives of Christ in all the ages, there has been no age in the history of the church when there was so perfect a realization of the picture presented by our Lord as in the apostolic age. The little company of Christians after the death of Christ seemed like sheep amongst wolves. They were harmless as doves, and yet they exercised remarkable wisdom; they could put no trust in men, and they were brought before ecclesiastical councils and civil rulers; they were beaten and scourged, and when they were persecuted in one city they fled to another.

When Jesus said in this part of his discourse "Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel till the Son of Man shall come," it seems probable that he referred to the coming of the Son of man at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem.

The last part of the discourse, verses 24 to 42, had a still wider range, and more direct application to a later age. It declared that the disciple was not above his Lord, and that he should expect from the world the same treatment that his Lord received. It revealed the only true source of Christian courage in any age, as it said, "Fear them not therefore; for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, and hid that shall not be made known. . . . Be not afraid of them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

Disciples of Christ and all true servants of God are to expect trials, and must face dangers while they are in the world. They are not to expect fair treatment, but they are to feel that the time will come when all secrets shall be revealed and their righteousness shall be recognized. They are to fear God and seek his approval; and he who fears God need fear no creature.



In this part of the discourse, as in the Sermon on the Mount, Christ assured his disciples that the very hairs of their heads were numbered, and that the slightest sacrifice for God would be recognized. He also demanded open confession, giving a promise to those who confessed him, coupled with a warning to those who for any reason refused to confess him. He added the remarkable statement that he did not come to send peace on the earth, but that he did come to unsheathe the sword of a conflict so fierce that it would array against each other those who are bound together in the closest ties of kinship.

The same general principles run through the entire discourse, and it can never grow old so long as Christ's servants seek the upbuilding of his kingdom in the world. The faithful servant can appropriate these words of the Master, whether he serve him in the most favorable fields in Christian lands, or in the darkest regions of heathenism. Everywhere there is need of the spirit of self sacrificing devotion; everywhere there is need of the courage that comes from trusting in God, and everywhere God will reward those who receive his servants kindly, even remembering the cup of cold water that is given in the name of a disciple. The one great essential fact to be recognized by Christians, as they work for the upbuilding of the kingdom in all the ages, is the fact that they are the servants of God to save men, and that they have a message from God for unsaved men. Missionaries, ministers of the gospel, Christian men and women of all classes, as they work for Christ, can appropriate these instructions of Christ, making only such changes as the different conditions and circumstances require. No messenger of Christ will fail in his mission so long as he follows these instructions and no one can be really successful who neglects them.

## XXXII

### THE MURDER OF JOHN THE BAPTIST AND FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND

Mark 6: 34. "And when he came out he saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd."

(Mat. 14: 1-21; Mark 6: 14-44; Luke 9: 7-17; John 6: 1-15.)

**T**HE murder of John the Baptist probably occurred while the twelve disciples were on their mission to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Mark tells of the disciples going forth, preaching, healing diseases and casting out demons and, in immediate connection, says that King Herod heard thereof and said, "John the Baptist is risen from the dead." Luke tells of the mission of the twelve, and adds that Herod was much perplexed on account of the rumor that John had risen from the dead. It is not surprising that Herod should be perplexed since his hands were red with the blood of such a man as John the Baptist. He probably did not believe in any real resurrection of the dead, but he shuddered as he looked out into the invisible world and felt that he had not closed his account with the murdered prophet of God. He had perverted justice, betrayed his trust, and murdered the innocent; and, when he heard of the mighty works of Jesus and his disciples, he associated them in some way with the great preacher of repentance whom he had murdered.

The murder of John the Baptist, the Elijah of the New Testament, was one of the most atrocious crimes that blacken the pages of human history. Herod Antipas and Herodias, his wife, bore a striking resemblance to Ahab and Jezebel, the deadly enemies of the Elijah of the Old Testament. Ahab was a weak, selfish, unmanly tool of an ambitious, unscrupulous and desperately wicked woman. Jezebel was capable of committing any crime and Ahab permitted her to exercise his royal authority for the murder of his subjects. Herod Antipas who, on the death of Herod the Great, became Tetrach of Galilee, was a weak, vacillating, superstitious voluptuary. He married the daughter of Aretas king of Arabia Petrea, but, after he had been married many years, on one of his numerous visits to Rome, he came under the influence of Herodias, the wife of his brother Herod Philip. Herodias was a strong minded, ambitious, conscienceless woman. She had married her cousin Herod Philip, and they had one daughter, but Herod Philip was not in a position to gratify her ambitions and she, having persuaded Antipas to divorce his lawful wife, deserted her husband and married Antipas.

When or how Herod Antipas first came into contact with John the Baptist we do not know, but, when he heard him preach, he was interested, heard him gladly and was brought under his influence. The Baptist, true to his mission as a preacher of repentance, rebuked Herod, saying, "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife." This enraged Herodias and she constrained Herod to arrest John, and would have constrained him to murder him forthwith, but for the fact that Antipas had some scruples of conscience, and for another more important fact that he feared the people who regarded John as a prophet. The imprisonment of

the fearless preacher did not satisfy the malicious and conscienceless Herodias. Even as a prisoner she both hated and feared him, and, with all the cunning of deadly malice, she deliberately schemed to have the faithful prophet murdered. According to the custom of the Herods, Antipas, on his birthday, made a supper to his lords, and the high captains, and the chief men of Galilee. On this occasion Herodias arranged an elaborate feast in the palace probably at Machaeris, where John was in prison. As the feast progressed, and the host and his guests were inflamed with wine, shameless dancing girls were brought in to entertain the revellers. Herodias had, however, prepared a special surprise for this occasion, and she sent her own daughter, Salome, as a dancing girl to dance before Herod and his guests. Herod was delighted, and said to her, "Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee. And he sware unto her, whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom."

Immediately Salome went to her mother and said, "What shall I ask." This was the moment for which Herodias had waited and planned, and she answered without hesitation, "The head of John the Baptist." Not a moment was to be lost. Herod might change his mind. Salome ran with haste saying, "I will that thou forthwith give me in a charger the head of John the Baptist." This outrageous request sobered and distressed Herod, and he was exceeding sorry, but "for the sake of his oaths, and of them that sat at meat, he would not reject her. And straightway the king sent forth a soldier of his guard and commanded him to bring his head: and he went and beheaded him in prison, and brought his head in a charger and gave it to the damsel and the damsel

gave it to her mother." There is hardly in all history a more horrible story of lust, hatred and murder.

The disciples of John came to the prison and took the body of their revered and beloved master and laid it in a tomb. These disciples had, at one time, been jealous of Jesus for their master's sake, but, now, when he has been foully murdered, in their deep sorrow, they come and tell Jesus. The record of this event is very brief, but intensely pathetic. One would like to know all the details as John's disciples told Jesus of the terrible tragedy; one would like to know what Jesus said in return to comfort them. We do know that only infinite patience could have restrained infinite power from executing swift and terrible justice on the guilty Herod and his infamous partner in wickedness.

What Jesus thought of Herod is indicated by his actions on the two occasions when he afterwards came in contact with him. On one of these occasions, the Pharisees said to Jesus, "Get thee out and go from hence for Herod would fain kill thee." Jesus replied, "Go and say to that fox, behold I cast out demons to-day and to-morrow and the third day I am perfected." On the other occasion, when Pilate sent Jesus to Herod Antipas for judgment, Jesus refused to recognize him in any way. On both these occasions the compassionate Saviour of men seemed to treat Herod with supreme contempt.

When Jesus saw John's disciples, he looked beyond the bloody tragedy that had been enacted in Herod's palace, and he committed John's case to him who judgeth righteously, knowing that,

"Though the mills of God grind slowly  
Yet they grind exceeding small;  
Though with patience he stands waiting,  
With exactness grinds he all."



Herod and his guilty paramour lived long enough to reap some of the bitter fruits of their crime. Aretas, to avenge the insult to his daughter, made war on him. Afterwards, when influenced by the ambition of Herodias, he sought a kingly title, he was banished from Rome and died in poverty and obscurity.

When Herod the Great murdered the little children at Bethlehem he placed his name on the scroll of infamy amongst the monsters of cruelty. He could, however, plead the law of self-preservation. Herod Antipas could not even do this, and his name goes down in history as a weak, cunning, conscienceless voluptuary.

About this time the twelve disciples of Jesus returned to him at or near Capernaum and told their experiences. They had heard of the murder of John, and would tell their Master all the details as they heard them. The multitude that had gathered about Jesus was so great that he and his disciples did not have time to eat. The friends of John the Baptist were there, pilgrims on their way to the passover feast at Jerusalem where there, and no doubt many came with the twelve on their return to their Master. Jesus was tired and depressed. The tragic death of his faithful forerunner could not fail to bring before his prophetic eyes the time when his own sufferings and death must be met. It is not strange therefore that he should say to his disciples, "Come ye yourselves apart into the desert and rest awhile."

They were at Capernaum and the place selected for this rest was on the north eastern shore of the Lake Gennesaret, south of Bethsaida Julias, about six miles from Capernaum. Jesus, with his disciples, went out across the lake in a boat. The people from all the cities in that region, seeing them depart, and, marking their course, guessed their destination, and went by land around the

northern end of the lake, reaching the uninhabited plain before the boat touched the shore. When our Lord saw the great multitude, and realized that his plans for rest were frustrated, instead of being indignant, was moved with compassion and, instead of rebuking the multitude, "he began to teach them many things." Luke says, "He welcomed them, and spoke to them of the kingdom, and them that had need of healing he healed." Jesus saw in this multitude a miniature lost world and, at such a sight, his own sorrows, weariness, hunger and thirst seemed to vanish.

When the day was drawing to a close the disciples suggested to him to send the multitudes into the country and villages to buy food for themselves; but Jesus said, "Give ye them to eat." The disciples replied, "Shall we go and buy two hundred penny worth of bread and give them to eat?" Jesus said, "How many loaves have ye?" Andrew answered, "There is a lad here that hath five barley loaves and two fishes; but what are they among so many?" Jesus did not answer his question in words, but he directed the disciples to "make the people sit down"; and, when all were seated on the green grass in an orderly fashion, he took the loaves and the fishes, and, "looking upward to heaven, he blessed and brake the loaves, and he gave to the disciples" to distribute to the people; and the two fishes he divided amongst them all. When they all ate and were filled there remained of the feast sufficient fragments to fill twelve baskets.

The feeding of the five thousand men with a few loaves was a miracle that seemed to convince the Jews that Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah. The miracle at Cana in Galilee had been witnessed by a comparatively small company, but this miracle was witnessed by thousands, and amongst these thousands were many Jews who

were looking for a leader like unto Moses, who would deliver their nation as Moses had delivered them from Egyptian bondage. Restlessness under the Roman rule was no doubt aggravated at this particular time by the act of Herod in murdering one whom many of the people recognized as a prophet. When these men saw Jesus miraculously feeding the great multitude their thoughts went backward to the time when Moses had fed their nation with bread from heaven and they believed that Christ had manifested the same divine power. He was, therefore, the ruler they had been looking for and they were ready to follow him in an effort to throw off the hated Roman yoke. They believed that if he had no arms and no supplies that he could, by supernatural power, provide them. They were, therefore, ready to proclaim him King of the Jews, and his disciples were carried away by their enthusiasm so that it would only have required a little time to organize a rebellion. Jesus, therefore, constrained his disciples to get into a boat and to go to Capernaum while he dismissed the multitude.

While this miracle was, for those who witnessed it, a convincing evidence of the messiahship of Jesus, it is for all Christians a revelation of the character and methods of Jesus Christ. He was weary and sad and needed rest, but when he saw the multitude he had compassion on them.

As has been said elsewhere, the word compassion describes more aptly than any other word the attitude of God in Christ toward sinning, suffering men. It was used to describe Christ's emotion as he looked on lepers and on the widow of Nain, and it is now used to describe his emotions as he looks on the multitude in the wilderness. In divine compassion the plan for man's redemption originated; with divine compassion Christ came to seek and

save lost men. Compassion is the great motive power for Christian activity in every age. A cold compassionless man is essentially un-Christian, and a compassionless church cannot be a Christian church. To those who are hungry, fainting and perishing for the bread of life the Christian church is never to say, Go elsewhere and buy bread. Christ's command to the disciples is for every messenger of Christ who finds any class or race of sinners that he would send away unsupplied. The gospel feast affords abundant provision for all men of every race and nation and is adapted to the needs of all men. Christian compassion will reach "the masses" and will abundantly supply every hungry soul. Lack of compassion and not lack of food is sending many hungry souls away from the church to buy food; and, as the Master looks out on the millions who are now perishing without the gospel, he is saying to his church "Give ye them to eat." There is enough for all men; it is adapted to the wants of all; it is to be freely offered to all. Christ will take care of the supply, if the Christian church will distribute the food.

### XXXIII

## JESUS WALKS ON THE SEA

Mat. 14: 27. "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid."

(Mat. 14: 23-33; Mark 6: 45-56; John 6: 16-21.)

**A**FTER feeding the multitude and sending the disciples across the lake, Jesus dismissed the people and withdrew to the mountain alone. It was a crisis in his redemptive work. The enthusiastic multitude were offering him what the tempter had offered him at the beginning of his public ministry. They recognized him as the prophet like unto Moses, the promised son of David who should wield a scepter of universal dominion, and they were ready to rebel against Cæsar, and crown him as their king. They had seen him feed five thousand men with a few loaves and they believed that a leader clothed with such power would enable them to throw off the hated Roman yoke and make themselves an independent people. The twelve disciples were probably in sympathy with the multitude and were beginning to hope that their Master would proclaim himself the King of the Jews and set up his kingdom.

To Jesus it all seemed discouraging and distressing. He saw in it all an utter misapprehension of the character of his kingdom, and, in order to put an end to the selfish, material delusion, he constrained the disciples to go away in a boat, and then withdrew from the multitude that he might be alone with God.



While Jesus was in his mountain sanctuary, the disciples, battling with winds and waves, had only succeeded in reaching the middle of the lake and were in distress. Only a few nights before this they had been caught in a terrific storm on that lake, but their Master had been with them, whereas now they were alone. As they contended with winds and waves their distress gave place to superstitious horror when they saw, toward morning, some one walking on the waters that were threatening to swamp their boat. While they looked at what they believed to be an apparition, they cried out in superstitious fear, but their fear changed to reverential awe when the voice of their Lord came to them over the waves, saying, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." The impulsive Peter exclaimed, "If it be thou, bid me come unto thee upon the water." Jesus said "Come." Instantly Peter left the boat and walked on the water, but when he saw the waves he was afraid, and, beginning to sink, cried, "Lord, save me." Jesus stretched forth his hand and, taking hold of the sinking disciple, said, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" When the two came into the boat the wind ceased and they that were in the boat worshipped him, saying, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God."

This unique sketch reveals and illuminates Christ's character as a present help in time of trouble. He saw his disciples struggling on the stormy sea through the midnight hours and he came to them across the storm tossed lake. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. Clothed with all authority, in heaven and upon earth, he can fulfill his promises and be with each disciple when the storms and waves on the sea of life seem about to destroy him. He is a "very present help in time of trouble." As he saw his disciples in their distress and

danger and came over the waves of Galilee, so too, he now comes to his disciples who need his help. When clouds gather, when the winds are contrary, when heart and flesh fail, and the disciples are in distress, they may hear his voice saying, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." No night is so dark that he cannot see his suffering disciples; no winds are so wild and no waves so high that he cannot come to them. On the shore, the preceding day, Christ had refused the offer to lead the multitude in the contest for kingly crown; but when night came on, and they were struggling for life, he presented himself, not only as king of men, but as Lord of wind and wave. He does not minister to selfish ambition but he will be with his disciples in their times of trouble, he will deliver them from their distresses and will bring them into the haven of rest.

The action of Peter was characteristic of the man. He could not control himself as did the other disciples, or as the average man would have done. He was a unique character, and, yet he was the center of special interest because he was so thoroughly human. Weakness and strength, vanity and humility, fickleness and faithfulness, childishness and manliness in the superlative degree combined to make him what he was. It was characteristic of this impetuous disciple to wish to go to Christ on the stormy sea; it was no less characteristic of his humility that he would not go without his Master's permission, and the same traits appeared, when, looking at the winds, beginning to sink, he cried "Lord, save me."

Jesus did not call attention to Peter's presumption or vanity. He saw in him more than mere presumption or vanity, and he saw in this act some elements of trustful, enthusiastic faith. He did not rebuke Peter for his enthusiasm, but he did say, "O thou of little faith, where-

fore didst thou doubt?" Jesus is less offended by rashness and imprudence of his disciples than he is by their lack of faith, especially when this lack of faith takes the form of selfish prudence or hopeless despair. John was the disciple that Jesus loved, but to the reckless presumptuous Peter, with a little faith, he gave the first place amongst the twelve.

This incident furnishes a good illustration of how faith in God differs from faith in self, and how faith in God is always linked with humility, while faith in self begets presumption. With faith in self Peter seeks to appear courageous and asks to walk over the waves; with distrust of self, when he sees the winds and waves and begins to sink, he cries, "Lord save me."

## XXXIV

### JESUS' POPULARITY BEGINS TO DECLINE

John 6: 66. "Upon this many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him."

(Mat. 14: 34; 15: 20; Mark 6: 53-7: 23; John 6: 22-71.)

**T**HE interchange of names by the different evangelists, as they give accounts of crossing the sea after the feeding of the five thousand, creates doubt as to the geographical location. Matthew says, "Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a boat and go before him unto the other side," and then adds, "when they had crossed over, they came to the land, unto Gennesaret." Mark, describing the same event, says "he constrained his disciples to enter into the boat, and to go before him unto the other side to Bethsaida, and he adds, "when they had crossed over, they came to the land unto Gennesaret." John says, the disciples "entered into a boat, and were going over the sea unto Capernaum," and he adds, "the boat was at the land whither they were going."

These different statements may be harmonized. The Bethsaida or Fisherton here spoken of, was a suburb or part of Capernaum. This is evident from other interchanging of the names. (Compare John 1: 44; 12-21 with Mark 1: 29.) The disciples launched out from the eastern shore, intending to land at Bethsaida, the fishing quarter at Capernaum, but were driven by the storm, so

that they actually did land and moor their boat at Gennesaret, whence they journeyed to Capernaum.

Matthew and Mark connect our Lord's return to Capernaum with the controversy with the scribes and Pharisees about hand washing, vows and other questions, whereas John connects it with the profound discussion concerning the true bread from heaven. The probable order of events is suggested by John, when he says that the discussion concerning the true bread from heaven took place in the synagogue. This indicates that it took place on the Jewish Sabbath. The multitude that had been fed in the wilderness did not discover that Jesus had crossed the lake until the following day, and when they made the discovery they came by boats to Capernaum seeking him. This would consume the greater part of the day, so that the conversation introduced by their coming and questions probably did not take place until the following day.

Assuming that the feeding of the five thousand took place on Thursday, Jesus, with his disciples, landed at Gennesaret on Friday morning and came to Capernaum where he met and rebuked the Pharisees. The next day was the Jewish Sabbath and Jesus spent part of the day in the synagogue, speaking of the true bread from heaven. Edersheim, after assuming this order, calls attention to a peculiar correspondence of dates when comparing this event with the last events of our Lord's mortal life. He sees in Peter's request to come to our Lord on the water, and his subsequent sinking in the waves, a foreshadowing of that disciple's boastfulness and grievous fall at the time of Christ's arrest.

John says that the feeding of the five thousand took place about the time of the passover. This passover was probably at the end of the second year of Christ's public



ministry, and he did not attend it. The proximity of this feast added to the multitude that came from Jerusalem and elsewhere to visit our Lord at Capernaum and were present when he landed with his disciples at Gennesaret. In the promiscuous crowd were Pharisees and scribes, and they asked Jesus why his disciples transgressed the tradition of the elders by eating without having washed their hands. The scribes and Pharisees may have marked this lack of ceremony when the disciples fed the five thousand on the eastern shore; or they may have seen them as they stopped to take food on their way from Gennesaret to Capernaum. The disciples were weary and hungry, and they would not be as careful in observing religious forms as they ordinarily were.

Whatever the circumstances, our Lord does not offer any excuse or apology, but he does defend the acts of his disciples. There was nothing in the ceremonial law of the Old Testament that required this washing of hands. The Pharisees had exalted the traditions of the elders above the law of God. Christ rebuked their zeal for traditions by saying, "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God?" As an example of their transgression he showed how the command to honour father and mother had been made void by their traditions that permitted religious cant to take the place of filial affection and reverence for parents. Then, probably for the first time, he openly and strongly denounced their religious pretensions, saying, "Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophecy of you, saying,

"This people honoreth me with their lips;  
But their heart is far from me.  
But in vain do they worship me,  
Teaching as their doctrine the precepts of men."

Then, addressing the multitude, and afterwards his immediate disciples, he showed the difference between true religion and mere ceremonial, declaring that men were defiled by evil thoughts and not by physical food nor by the manner of taking it.

This discourse marked another crisis in our Lord's history. He had reached the climax of popularity, and, from the standpoint of human wisdom, he should have been careful to not make enemies. But it was his mission to glorify the Father, and he could not glorify God by encouraging the belief that God cared more for the washing of hands and professions of piety than he did for a pure heart and faithful performance of duty. At any cost he must teach men that no outward forms can please God so long as the heart is sending forth covetings, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, falsehoods, railings and other evil thoughts. He could not, even by silence, give his consent when men were teaching that godliness was only an outward form and not a living power; he could not be silent when men were teaching that God was willing to accept pious vows as a substitute for obedience to his revealed will.

If the whole of Friday was taken up with the journey to Capernaum, healing the sick and this discussion concerning purifying and traditions, the discussion recorded in the sixth chapter of John occurred on the next Jewish Sabbath.

The conversation was introduced by a question of some of those who had come from the other side of the sea, saying, "Rabbi, when comest thou hither?" They probably had heard of his walking on the sea, and they may have hoped that he would speak of the marvelous event; or they may have only indicated their curiosity and their surprise by their question. Jesus did not an-

swer their question, but he did say in reply, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye seek me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves and were filled. Work not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which abideth unto eternal life which the Son of man shall give unto you; for him the Father, even God hath sealed." Replying to this reproof, which they seemed to accept with humility, they said, "What must we do, that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."

Instead of accepting this answer to their question they reminded Jesus that Moses had given their fathers manna in the wilderness, and they said, "What doest thou for a sign that we may see and believe thee?" Jesus replied, "Verily, verily I say unto you it was not Moses that gave you the bread out of heaven; but my father giveth you the true bread of heaven for the word of God is he that cometh down out of heaven and giveth life unto the world." They said therefore unto him, "Lord, evermore, give us this bread."

These people had been ready to proclaim Jesus their king because they had eaten of the loaves, but they wished him to continue the supply as Moses had done. They did not recognize the miracle he had performed as a sufficient confirmation of his claim to be the representative of God, but rather as a foundation of hope that he would continue to minister to their material and physical needs.

This conversation served as an introduction to a most profound discourse, as Jesus said, "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. - But I said unto you, that ye have seen me, and ye believe not. All that which

the Father giveth me shall come unto me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the will of him that sent me, that of all that which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day."

At this point the discourse was interrupted by the murmuring of the Jews, as they said, "Is not this Jesus, the Son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How doth he now say, I am come down out of heaven?" Jesus answered, "Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father who sent me draw him; and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets, and they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is from God, he hath seen the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth hath eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which cometh down out of heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down out of heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; yea and the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world."

At this point another interruption occurred as the Jews strove one with another and said, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Jesus replied, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father; so he that eateth me, he also shall live because of me. This is the bread which came down out of heaven: not as the fathers did eat, and died; he that eateth this bread, shall live for ever."

By this time many of the disciples were displeased and so manifested their disapproval that Jesus said, "Doth this cause you to stumble? What then if ye should behold the Son of man ascending where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life."

The dissatisfaction now became so general and so manifest that Jesus said unto the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" Simon Peter answered, saying, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God." Jesus replied, "Did I not choose you the twelve, and one of you is a devil? Now he spake of Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, for he it was that should betray him."

It may seem surprising that our Lord should enter into such a profound discourse when he saw the lack of spiritual perception, but his teaching here was not unlike his method of teaching at the well in Samaria. There he started with a very simple request for water to quench his thirst, and he ended with profound spiritual truths. Here he began with feeding a hungry multitude, and he led them up to the great mystery of godliness in which the true disciple eats the flesh, drinks the blood of the Son of man and enters into such vital union with him as to have a share in all the benefits of his redemptive work. He warned his disciples against thinking that he was speaking



of material eating and drinking of his flesh and blood, saying, "it is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." He lifted the thoughts of all who would follow him out of the realms of the seen, the sensual and the perishable into the realms of the unseen, the spiritual and the eternal. He could feed the hungry multitudes with food for their bodies; he could walk upon the sea and could control the winds and the waves; but these were only incidental matters. His kingdom is not of this world, not a material kingdom; he came to give men the bread of eternal life; he came to calm their spiritual storms and give them the very peace of God; he came that they might eat his flesh and drink his blood in such a way as to enter into real and vital union with him and become partakers of his life, so as to become the Sons of God. He taught his disciples that the instrument or channel of power for doing all this was faith when he said, "this is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom God hath sent." Unbelieving Jews will continue to say "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" but the believing heart can say, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me," and, "because he lives I shall live also."

The great majority of those who heard this most profoundly spiritual discourse were displeased and alienated from Christ. They were disappointed. They had been looking for a Messiah that would minister to all their selfish, sensual desires, a Messiah that would minister to their national pride and satisfy their vaulting ambitions. Christ's words had destroyed their illusions and there was, not only a decline of enthusiasm, but such a general turning away from him that he was constrained to say to the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" Jesus well knew what it all meant. He saw even here the beginning of

that movement that would end in his crucifixion. He saw, too, that one of the twelve was not really with him. It was the beginning of the end. Selfishness was disappointed, Hatred and malice were coming in to take the place of thwarted ambition. Christ's kingdom was not of this world, and he saw in the distance the betrayal in Gethsemane and the cross on Calvary.

It seems impossible for any one to read this profoundly spiritual discourse, and believe that Jesus Christ said all this, without either rejecting him as a deceiver or accepting him as the divine Son of God—the Unique Revealer of God. When these words were first spoken they separated the multitude into two classes, one of whom were offended and rejected him, and the other said in substance, with Peter, "to whom shall we go? for thou hast the words of eternal life." This discourse of Jesus is making the same cleavage to-day; true believers find in Jesus' person and work the bread of life, and, in him, have eternal life, while unbelievers are offended.

## XXXV

### JESUS AND THE SYRO-PHŒNICIAN WOMAN

Mat. 15:28. "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

(Mat. 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30.)

**I**F, as we have assumed, the feeding of the five thousand took place on Thursday, the controversy concerning traditions and purifying on Friday, and the discussion concerning the true bread from heaven on the Jewish Sabbath, we may infer that on the first day of the week Jesus started in the direction of Tyre. We are not told why he, who was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, should go into the borders of Tyre and Sidon. It seems evident, though, that he sought rest and solitude, for he entered into a house and would have no man know it. His effort to find solitude and rest on the eastern shore of the sea had signally failed, for the feeding of the five thousand had brought a crisis that increased both his labours and his dangers. He saw the selfish, sensual multitude planning to crown him as King of the Jews and place him in the position of a leader in rebellion against the Roman government. He saw also the beginnings of disappointment and defection that would end in his betrayal and crucifixion, and he withdrew from the crowd and took with him the twelve disciples, one of whom he recognized as his betrayer.

The distance from Capernaum to Tyre is about forty miles, but in his first journey Jesus only came "into the

borders of Tyre and Sidon," probably not more than half the distance from Capernaum to Tyre. It was about the time of the passover and may have been the passover week that he spent in this house where we are told he sought concealment.

This journey brought Jesus into contact with the world's oldest and most advanced civilization. The Phœnicians gave to the world the first alphabetical writing; and the Old Testament contains many references to the magnificence of Tyre, the metropolis of Phœnicia. Joshua characterizes her as "the strong city," and, in Solomon's day, she was preeminent for architectural beauty. Ezekiel taxes the entire geography of the known world in his descriptions of her riches and splendor, as he tells of her fir trees from Senir, her cedars from Lebanon, her oaks from Bashan, her ivory from Chittim, her fine linen from Egypt, her iron and silver from Spain, her emeralds and corals from Syria, her gold and precious stones from Sheba. (Ezekiel 27: 1-36.)

The Phœnicians, even in Christ's day, had inherited the fruits of many centuries of civilization; but they still needed some one who was able to bind up broken hearts; and, when Jesus Christ came into their borders, "he could not be hid." A Greek Syro-Phœnician woman, whose little daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and, coming to him, fell down at his feet, crying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a demon."

Of this woman we only know that she was a Greek, a Syro-Phœnician, and that she was a gentile, and not one of the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Christ had healed the son of a Roman centurion, and we should have expected him to hear at once such an appeal as this mother presented for her child, but "he answered her not

a word." Her deep distress, her pathetic and persevering plea touched and distressed the disciples and they came to the Master beseeching him to send her away comforted, but he replied, "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." When the woman renewed her petitions, saying, "Lord, help me," he answered, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." This seemed an absolute and a harsh refusal, yet the woman found in this answer a plea, as she said, "Yea Lord, for even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their Master's table." Her plea prevailed, and Jesus answered, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt; and her daughter was healed from that hour."

What is the explanation of our Lord's treatment of this afflicted woman? Why does the compassionate Saviour, who would not break the bruised reed nor quench the glimmering wick, speak such words to a wretched heart-broken mother when she comes to plead for her child?

This at first seems a hard question. But is it, after all, essentially different from the questions, Why does a loving, heavenly Father permit any of his children to suffer? Why does God ever seem to hide his face? Do we not find the answer to all these questions in the assurance that no man lives for himself? This woman may have needed just such treatment in order to the development of her own faith; or she may have been chosen to give to others a great lesson of humble, persevering faith and its rewards. No candid reader will find in this incident any evidence that Jesus Christ was careless of human suffering. He permitted this woman to suffer, but he did not afflict willingly. He is the same loving Sav-



jour now, and, though he tarry, he will come at the best time, and with real help for those who trust him.

Our Lord's commendation of this woman is very significant. An ordinary or superficial observer might have expected him to say, "O woman, great is thy humility!" or, "Great is thy love!" Her love for her child had constrained her to humbly accept the name that Jewish pride had given to the heathen world, or to other nations. She had repressed her national pride and had come to one who claimed to be Israel's Messiah, one whom she addressed as the son of David, asking for help. Her daughter was grievously vexed with a demon, and she was willing to endure anything in order to save the loved one. She pled as she probably would not have pled for her own life. When she seemed to be harshly rebuked, she persisted, saying, "Lord help me." As one reads this part of the story he is ready to exclaim, "What will not a mother's love do?" But Christ saw what seemed to him more wonderful, more worthy of note than even this maternal affection, and he said, "O woman, great is thy faith!" Her faith had lifted her above all the petty pride of race and of nationality, and had enabled her to prevail in prayer. In her faith Christ saw the victory that despises shame, ignores obstacles, removes mountains and overcomes the world. She was passing through deep waters, and by the Spirit of God, working, when, where and how he will, she was able to believe that the Christ of God, the Messiah of Israel, could and would help her. Maternal affection with its self-sacrificing abandon is a beautiful thing; but faith that trusts God and links man to God in Christ is infinitely better and more beautiful. Maternal affection is the greatest thing in the natural world, but by faith we are lifted into the realms of the spiritual and supernatural and are made

perfect in love. When this mother found her daughter healed, she did not need to forget the seeming harshness of the great Physician. Her faith saw the love of God in it all.

"O gift of gifts! O grace of faith!  
My God how can it be,  
That thou who hast discerning love,  
Shouldst give that gift to me!  
The crowd of cares, the weightiest cross,  
Seem trifles less than light  
Earth looks so little and so low  
When faith shines full and bright."

## XXXVI

### FROM PHŒNICIA THROUGH DECAPOLIS TO GALILEE

Mat. 15:31. "And again he went out from the borders of Tyre, and came through Sidon unto the Sea of Galilee, through the midst of the borders of Decapolis."

(Mat. 15:31-39; Mark 7:31-8:10.)

JESUS probably remained "in the borders of Tyre and Sidon" only a few days, for "he could not be hid," and he did not find the solitude and rest he sought. From his first resting place he passed northward through Sidon. On this journey he could see Sarepta, and would think of Elijah's flight and miracles to which he had referred when speaking to the people of Nazareth. He could also look out over the Mediterranean Sea, with its ships from Greece, Italy, Spain and other commercial countries of the civilized world. After leaving Sidon he turned eastward, probably going up the valley of the Bostreus and passing through some opening in the Lebanon mountains into the deep valley of the Leontas. From this point he could go farther northward and cross over into the sources of the river Jordan, and then journey southward on the eastern shore of the Jordan, through the borders of Decapolis.

The name Decapolis, meaning ten cities, was applied to a region of allied cities east of the Jordan, including Bethshean west of that river.

From the time Jesus and his disciples left the borders of Tyre and Sidon until they reached the Sea of Galilee, they traveled not less than one hundred miles through a country inhabited by gentiles. Of what Jesus did and said on this long journey amongst a semi-pagan people where he would see shrines of heathen divinities, there are very meagre records. Matthew seems to be speaking of what took place on this journey when he says, "There came unto him multitudes, having with them the lame, blind, dumb, maimed and many others, and they cast them down at his feet, and he healed them; inso-much that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb speaking, the maimed whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel." Mark gives no general history of this period, but he tells in detail of the healing of one man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech. The friends who brought this man to Jesus besought him "to lay his hands upon him." Jesus had healed others with a word, but he chose to make this healing gradual, and to connect it with some outward forms. He took the man aside from the multitude, put his fingers in his ears, spat and touched his tongue, and, looking up to heaven, sighed, and said "Ephphatha! Be opened." When the word had been spoken the man's ears were opened, the impediment in his speech was removed, and "he spake plain." The multitude were astonished beyond measure and said, "He hath done all things well."

There is no good reason for the inference that this use of outward forms is peculiar to the healing of Gentiles; for the daughter of the Syro-Phœnician mother was healed without being brought into the presence of Jesus. Nor can any one say, with any degree of confidence or authority, why, in this particular case, the evangelist puts

on record the fact that Jesus sighed. When he groaned in spirit and wept at the tomb of Lazarus, the outward manifestations of deep distress led the people to say, "Behold how he loved him!" But we do not find in this record any explanation of our Lord's peculiar sadness. His compassionate heart was always saddened by the sight of suffering, and this sigh may have been only the escape of a little of that pent up emotion that filled the heart of "The Man of Sorrows." Here, as elsewhere, his strict charge that the healing should not be published abroad was disobeyed.

The healing of the deaf man appears to have taken place not far from the Sea of Galilee. The multitudes that had gathered about the great Physician had nothing to eat. When Jesus saw their condition he called his disciples and said, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days and have nothing to eat; and if I send them away fasting to their home, they will faint in the way; and some of them have come from far."

It may at first seem remarkable that the disciples did not at once suggest that their Master should again do as he had done when he fed five thousand men with a few loaves. But a little consideration will indicate good reasons why they should not presume to make such a suggestion. Only once, in all his ministry, had he used his supernatural power to feed a hungry multitude; and, after that event, he had rebuked the multitude for following him because they had eaten of the loaves rather than because they had seen the miracle. Their not reminding him of that miracle indicated profound reverence rather than lack of faith. There was humble reverence in their question, "Whence shall one be able to fill these men with bread here in a desert place?" Their faith in him was



evident, when they, without hesitation, obeyed his commands and proceeded to feed four thousand men together with women and children with seven loaves and a few small fishes.

It is not necessary to answer the question whether this might not be only another account of the former miracle when five thousand men were fed. If one evangelist had recorded the feeding of the five thousand and a different writer had recorded this miracle, the critics might have raised such a question. But the same evangelists record both. The two accounts are different in every essential particular, in time, circumstances, numbers, provisions, fragments, and, especially in the composition of the multitude who were fed. In the former miracle many of the multitude were Jews who wished to crown Jesus as King. On this occasion the greater part of the multitude were gentiles. Moreover, our Lord himself reminded the disciples afterwards of the two different events. (Mark 8: 19-20.)

Edersheim calls attention to the significant fact that our Lord closed his Galilean ministry by feeding the five thousand, his ministry in Decapolis by feeding the four thousand, and his ministry in Judea by instituting the Lord's Supper. The five thousand were mostly Jews from Capernaum, or Jews on the way to the passover at Jerusalem; the four thousand were gentiles, and only the disciples were present to partake of the Lord's supper in that upper room in Jerusalem.

## XXXVII

### THE GREAT CONFESSION

Mat. 16: 16. "And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

(Mat. 16: 1-28; Mark 8: 11-9: 1; Luke 9: 18-27.)

**A**FTER feeding the four thousand, Matthew, speaking of Jesus, says, "He sent the multitudes away, and entered into the boat and came into the borders of Magadan." Mark says: "Straightway he entered into the boat with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha." He probably came across the Sea of Galilee to the west coast, landing a little south of the plain of Gennesaret. Here he met the Pharisees and Sadducees, who began to question him, seeking a sign from heaven, tempting him. Mark records the fact that he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, "Why doth this generation seek a sign? verily I say unto you, there shall no sign be given unto this generation." Matthew says that Jesus rebuked the sign seekers, calling attention to their readiness to fortell fair and foul weather, and their failure to discern the signs of the times.

It seems remarkable that the Sadducees, who did not believe in the spiritual world, should be asking for a sign. Nevertheless, credulity and skepticism frequently go hand in hand, and these Sadducees, having heard of Christ's miracles, wished to see one. Neither Pharisees nor Sadducees were honest seekers after truth and light. The gentiles in Decapolis had manifested a friendly

spirit, saying, "he doth all things well;" but Jesus perceived the enmity in the hearts of these Jewish sign-seekers, and he said, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign and there shall no sign be given it but the sign of Jonah."

After this brief but hostile meeting with the Pharisees and Sadducees, Jesus, with his disciples, departed in a boat to the coast of Bethsaida-Julius, on the way to Cæsarea Philippi. The heart of Jesus was very sad and the disciples were discouraged and depressed.

When they reached the other side of the lake Jesus said to the disciples, "Take heed, and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." These words indicate the trend of our Lord's thoughts as they came across the sea. He had seen and felt the hypocrisy and deadly enmity that was growing in the hearts of these rulers of the Jews, and he warned his disciples. His words were misunderstood, for his disciples had forgotten to take bread and they thought their Master was referring to this neglect. It is possible that they had in their minds the thought that their having no bread would compel their Master to work another miracle and thus give a sign from heaven, and they may have thought that he was warning them against the sign-seeking spirit of the Jews. It is far more probable, however, that they had been so concerned about their neglect to bring the needed provisions for their journey that they associated our Lord's words with what was in their own minds. They were nervous and anxious and were as much worried about trifles as they were about the greatest and most important matters. Jesus, perceiving this anxiety, said, "Do ye not perceive, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand,

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and how many baskets ye took up? How is it that ye do not perceive that I spake not to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

In this connection Mark tells of the healing of a blind man as Jesus and the disciples came to Bethsaida. It is possible that this event did not take place at this particular time, but there is scarcely room for reasonable doubt. The connection in which the evangelist records it, the manner of healing, with all the attendant incidents seem to prove conclusively that this miracle was wrought after Jesus had left the boat and was on his way to Cæsarea Philippi.

Jesus took the man by the hand, brought him out of the multitude, spat on his eyes and laid his hands upon him, and said "seest thou aught?" And he looked up, and said, "I see men; for I behold them as trees walking." Then again he laid his hands upon his eyes; and he looked steadfastly, and was restored, and saw all things clearly. And he sent him away to his home, saying, "Do not even enter into the village."

A conversation that occurred in the neighbourhood of Cæsarea Philippi is recorded by Matthew, Mark and Luke. Christ's miracles attracted the attention of all beholders, but this conversation of Jesus with his disciples brought out the great essential truths concerning his person and his redemptive work. In this conversation there is developed a great confession, a great commission, a great revelation and a great promise.

A review of the condition and circumstances may aid us in understanding this conversation. At the beginning of his public ministry Jesus had gone from Judea into Galilee; he had attended at least two Jewish feasts at Jerusalem, and had gone through Galilee healing the dis-

eased and preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God; he had traveled through Phœnicia and Decapolis, and excited such interest that the whole land from center to circumference was filled with rumours concerning his mighty works and with questions as to his claim to be the promised Messiah.

When the popular interest in Jesus was at its height, and he was the great center of attraction and the theme of conversation, he crossed the lake, withdrew from the multitude and went, with his disciples, to Cæsarea Philippi, some forty miles north of the Sea of Galilee, to Lake Merom. On this journey, looking southward he could see the whole lake of Gennesaret with the valley of the Jordan; before him were the hills, on the west the height of Hafed, with Hermon in the distance, and towering Lebanon for a back ground to the picture. Leaving Merom and the scenes of Joshua's victory over Jabin, he passed over hills and through rich cultivated plains until he reached Cæsarea.

On the way, or at the end of this long journey, separated from the crowd and alone with his disciples, Jesus asked the disciples what might seem a casual or curious question, saying, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" He did not ask this question for information, for he knew the great variety of opinions that had been expressed. He had been recognized as a divinely commissioned teacher. He had been called the Son of David and the Son of God, and his question now seemed only to be asked in order to prepare the way for another. When the disciples answered, "Some say John the Baptist; some Elijah, and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets," he said, "But who say ye that I am?"

To this direct, personal question Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God,"



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This answer of Peter expressed the belief of the other disciples, but his prompt, sincere and definite reply to Jesus marked him as the real leader, and Jesus, recognizing the indwelling Spirit that prompted the answer, said, "Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jonah; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth shall be loosed in heaven."

In this surprising and extended response to Peter's confession, our Lord, with the greatest possible emphasis, proclaimed himself the Christ, the Son of God. He declared, at the same time, that this great truth, expressed by, and, in a measure, personified in Peter, as he was filled with the Spirit of God, should be the strong foundation of the Christian church. This great truth is the bed-rock of Christianity. Simon son of Jonah, not by flesh and blood, but by revelation of the Father, knew it and expressed it, and our Lord approved it.

Peter, very soon afterward, uttered sentiments that were not revealed to him by the Father, nor dictated by the Spirit of God, and Christ rebuked him.

When Jesus said to Peter, "I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven," he recognized him as the representative of others, for essentially the same promise was made to all the disciples after Christ's resurrection, (John 20:23) when he breathed on them, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

These are most luminous and significant facts. When Peter, not taught by flesh and blood but by the Father,

made the great confession, he was given the keys of the kingdom; when the disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost, they had power to forgive sins; when the Christian church is filled with the Spirit of God, and only then, it has the keys of the kingdom. When Peter afterwards would presume to mislead his Master and persuade him to not make the great sacrifice, he receives the stern rebuke, "Get thee behind me Satan; thou art a stumbling block unto me; for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men." When the Christian church is filled with the Spirit of God it has authority, and when it is filled with mere worldly wisdom and would persuade men against self-sacrificing devotion, its voice becomes the voice of Satan and not the voice of God.

The direct connection of our Lord's claim to be the Son of God, as Peter confessed him, with his foretelling that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer death; the close connection between Christ's high commendation of Peter and his stern rebuke of Peter, are well adapted to arrest our attention; and they furnish the key to the real meaning of his words. But something more is needed in order to see how this conversation concerns the Christian church, and that something is supplied when Christ goes on to say, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life, or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?"

Our Lord is not speaking in this place of the soul of man as distinct from his body; and he is not speaking of man's mere physical or mortal life; but he is speaking of the real life of man as created in the image of God. He

had been speaking of the necessity for his own sacrifice, and he shows that his disciples must follow him by having the same self-sacrificing spirit. They must not live for self but for God as he is revealed in Christ; they must be ready to follow Christ who was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Self sacrifice is self saving, and self-seeking or selfishness is suicide. This is Christ's teaching here and elsewhere.

The instruction does not end here. While this law of life will in this sin-cursed world bring suffering, it will not always be so. The disciples of Christ are not called to suffer for the sake of suffering, but because, in this world of sin and conflict, suffering is necessary for the overthrow of evil, and the establishment of righteousness. It will not be so always, "The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then shall he render to every man according to his deeds." Godliness is profitable. There is a divine selfishness that serves God, doing always the right, and, trusting God, while it waits for the final triumph of right.

Just what was meant by the promise that some who stood there should not see death until they had seen the coming of the Son of man, is doubtful. It probably had reference to the judgments visited on Jerusalem some years afterwards. There is room for doubt also as to why our Lord, at this time, forbade his disciples telling any man that he was the Christ. In this wonderful conversation with the disciples there was a great confession, a great commission, great revelation and a great promise, but the time had not yet come for a full revelation of the great mystery of suffering to the whole world.

## XXXVIII

### THE TRANSFIGURATION

Mat. 17: 5. "While he was yet speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."  
(Mat. 17: 1-8; Mark 9: 2-8; Luke 9: 28-36.)

**I**F the public ministry of our Lord covered a period of a little more than three years, as is generally believed, and as we have assumed, his visit to Cæsarea Philippi occurred in the early part of the third year. During the first two years he visited Jerusalem twice, at least, preached throughout Galilee, visited Samaria, and made a tour through Phœnicia and Decapolis. His popularity had reached its highest point. Many of the Jews were ready to crown him as their King; the semi-pagans in Decapolis recognized him as Israel's Messiah, and the faith of his own disciples seemed stronger and clearer than at any time before his resurrection. The definite, comprehensive confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," recognized him as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy and promise, as the realization of Israel's hope. The faith of the disciples that found expression in the words of Peter constituted the disciples the nucleus of the Christian church. For two years Christ's influence had been deepening and widening and the opposition had been suppressed by popular sentiment, but the climax had been reached and the descent must begin.

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Of Christ's movements during the week following the great confession we have no definite knowledge. Matthew and Mark tell us that, after six days, he took Peter and James and John up into a high mountain apart by themselves. Luke says, "About eight days after these sayings, he took with him Peter and John and James and went up into the mountain to pray."

This difference in regard to time may be explained by saying that Luke only used another method of enumerating days. It seems more satisfactory, however, to suppose that the great confession took place on Sabbath and that the going up into the mountain occurred in the evening after the close of the following Sabbath. If this were true, it would be natural for Matthew and Mark to speak of six intervening week days, while Luke might speak of the evening of the following Sabbath as "about eight days afterwards."

How did Christ and his disciples spend this great and important week? If we could answer this question we could point out the real Mount of Transfiguration. Alford, without giving any sufficient reason, assumes that this week was spent journeying southward, so that the Transfiguration might have occurred on Mount Tabor, or some other mountain in Galilee. Mark's statement (Mark 9:30), as he tells of Jesus going forth through Galilee after the Transfiguration seems to contradict the claim that he had been in Galilee at the time of the Transfiguration.

In view of all the known facts, and without stopping to enumerate them, it seems most probable that this week was spent in the neighbourhood of Cæsarea Philippi, and that much of the time was devoted to instructing the disciples concerning the kingdom. They had professed their faith in him as the Messiah, but, like Peter, they



could not bear the thought that their Master should suffer; that he should be rejected by elders, chief priests and scribes; that he should be killed. They could not at once grasp the meaning of the promise that he would rise again, and of that more distant promise of his second coming. Jesus probably talked with them at length concerning these great events, and then ascended Mt. Hermon, north of Cæsarea, where he was transfigured.

Mount Hermon is the most conspicuous and beautiful mountain in Syria. It is at the southern end, and is the culminating point of the Anti-Lebanon range. Rising to a height of about 10,000 feet above the sea, and, overlooking the whole Jordan valley, it can be seen from all parts of Palestine. Tristram visited Mount Hermon and, speaking of his ascent, says, "we were at last on Hermon, whose snowy head had been a sort of polestar for the last six months. We had looked at him from Sidon, from Tyre, from Carmel, from Gerazim, from the hills about Jerusalem, from the Dead Sea, from Gilead and from Nebo, and now we were looking down on them all."

Into this "high mountain" Jesus Christ withdrew with Peter, James and John, the three disciples who were chosen to witness the raising of the daughter of Jairus, and, afterwards, went farthest with him into Gethsemane. Why he did not take all his disciples to witness the Transfiguration we are not told, and we need not inquire. It is as well attested as if all had been present. Matthew, Mark and Luke give it a prominent place in their narratives, while Peter speaks of it in his second Epistle (2nd Peter 1: 16-18), and John refers to it when he says, "We beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father."

Christ had reached the highest point of popularity and, as he began the descent that would lead him to Calvary,

he went up into this high mountain to pray and to talk with the Old Testament representatives of the law and the Prophets about his decease that he was to accomplish at Jerusalem. While he prayed, the three disciples, "were heavy with sleep," as they were afterwards, when he prayed in the Garden. When they were aroused from their semi-conscious stupor they saw the face of the Master shining as the sun, while his garments were white as the light, and Moses and Elijah were talking with him. He had told his disciples of the sufferings and death that awaited him at Jerusalem, and now they saw him talking with Moses and Elijah about the same great event—the event for which he became incarnate—the hour to which all the past history of redemption pointed forward, and the hour to which all the redeemed host in all succeeding ages shall look backward.

Peter, carried beyond himself by the transcendent glory, exclaimed, "It is good for us to be here; if thou wilt, I will make here three tabernacles; one for thee, one for Moses and one for Elijah."

While he was yet speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them; and, behold, a voice out of the cloud, said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

This was more than the disciples could look upon, and they fell on their faces and were sore afraid "and, when they looked up, they saw no one save Jesus only."

This is the simple but sublime story of the Transfiguration. It was a glimpse of heaven's glory. This may have been a partial fulfillment of Christ's words as he had said, "There be some of them that stand here who shall in no wise taste of death until they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."

Nothing can be added to the beauty, simplicity and sublimity of this scene. God appeared to Moses on Mt. Sinai, and, through him, as Israel's chosen mediator, gave to his own people the ten commandments. On Mount Carmel God revealed himself as the God of power, and, in answer to the prayer of Elijah, sent fire to consume his sacrifice and confound the prophets of Baal. Sinai and Carmel only point forward to the Mount of Transfiguration where Moses and Elijah talked with Jesus Christ about his decease that he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

As Moses and Elijah disappeared, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye him." When the prostrate disciples looked up, they saw no one save Jesus only.

## XXXIX

### HEALING A DEMONIAK BOY

Mark 9: 23. "All things are possible to him that believeth."  
(Mat. 17: 9-21; Mark 9: 9-29; Luke 9: 37-43.)

**I**T is not surprising that the disciples were bewildered by what they saw and heard at the time of the Transfiguration. The prophets had foretold a suffering as well as a reigning Messiah, but the Jews had looked only at the promised glory and had overlooked the predicted sufferings. When the disciples found all these Old Testament predictions condensed into the lessons and observations of a few days, the contrasts were amazing and bewildering. They confessed Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God, and their confession was approved, but they were promptly assured that the Christ must be rejected by the Jews and that he must be put to death. Three disciples saw the Master's glory as he talked with Moses and Elijah, but they heard also the topic of conversation, "his decease that he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem." When they were assured that the Son of man must suffer and that they must look forward to his resurrection from the dead if they would see his real glory, it is not surprising that they questioned amongst themselves what this rising from the dead might mean.

As Jesus and his three disciples came down from the mountain he charged them that they should not tell their vision to any one until the Son of man should have risen

from the dead. The disciples did not know, at that time, what the rising from the dead meant, but they seemed to associate it with their seeing Elijah, for they asked the Master to explain the saying of the scribes that Elijah must first come. In his answer to this question our Lord showed them that John the Baptist was the promised Elijah, that he had come and had performed and suffered his part in God's great plan for the redemption of men, and that now the Son of man must suffer many things and be set at naught.

One can hardly imagine a more striking contrast than is to be seen when he places the scenes on the Mount of Transfiguration beside the events that were witnessed at the foot of the mountain next day. On the Mount of Transfiguration he catches a glimpse of heaven's glory and purity, but at the foot of the mountain he sees poor sin-cursed humanity at its worst. On the mountain he sees Jesus and his disciples in company with Moses and Elijah, and hears the Father's voice saying, "This is my beloved Son;" in the valley he hears the story of wretchedness, and is brought in contact with the kingdom of darkness.

When Jesus and the three disciples reached the foot of the mountain they found the other disciples surrounded by a multitude including scribes, who were asking the disciples questions. When the multitude saw Jesus he became the great center of interest, and he soon learned the reason for the great and excited crowd. A father had brought his demoniac son to the disciples that they might heal him and they could not. Matthew speaks of the boy as an epileptic, but Mark, as usual, gives a more minute account, as he quotes the appeal of the boy's father to Jesus. The father said, "Master, I brought unto thee my son who hath a dumb spirit, and whenso-



ever it taketh him it dasheth him down, and he foameth and grindeth his teeth and pineth away; and I spake unto thy disciples that they should cast it out; and they were not able." The father's appeal includes the pathetic plea, "He is my only son." Jesus said, not only to the father, but to all the company, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and bear with you? bring hither thy son."

As the afflicted boy came to Jesus "the demon dashed him down and rent him grievously," and when Jesus saw the wretched sufferer, he asked the father how long his son had been in that condition. The father answered, "From a child, and oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire and into the waters, to destroy him, but if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us."

Our Lord recognized the appeal to his compassion, but he corrected the father's petition before he granted it. The father had said, "If thou canst do anything," but Jesus said, "If thou canst! All things are possible to him that believeth."

When the father heard these words and felt that the responsibility for his son's healing rested on himself, he exclaimed, "I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

Again the prayer of faith, coupled with prayer for faith, prevailed and Jesus healed the boy, saying to the unclean spirit, "I command thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him." The demon obeyed, but in such a way that the child seemed as though he were dead. Christ took him by the hand and raised him up and gave him back to his father.

After our Lord and his disciples had come into a house, the disciples asked the Master why they could not cast out this demon, and he replied, "This kind can come out by nothing save by prayer." He declared that their

failure to heal the boy was due to their lack of faith, and he added, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible unto you."

Only the most superficial student of our Lord's teachings could fail to be deeply impressed by his constant emphasis of the necessity for faith. Faith seemed to always be the great, essential condition of the exercise of his healing, saving power. There must be faith, both in the hearts of those who seek help for themselves and in those who bring others to be healed. When the paralytic was brought by four friends and let down through the roof, Jesus, "seeing *their* faith," said to the sick man, "Son, thy sins are forgiven;" when the sick woman confessed that she had touched the hem of his garment and was healed, Jesus said, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole;" when the Syro-Phœnician mother besought him to heal her afflicted daughter, Jesus said, "O woman, great is thy faith;" and to this father, and afterwards to his own disciples, Jesus said, "All things are possible to him that believeth."

What was this faith that Jesus Christ so constantly demanded and so strongly commended? What was this faith that seemed to measure and limit our Lord's own omnipotence?

The answer to this question may be so elaborate as to develop a whole system of theology and involve the doctrines of divine sovereignty and human freedom. Or it may be very simple. Faith is the consciousness of seeing God's face, hearing God's voice, trusting God's promises, yielding to God's will as revealed in Jesus Christ.

If, with this afflicted father, we say sincerely, "I believe, help thou mine unbelief," we shall have the power

that removes mountains, the victory that overcomes the world. It is faith that links to God in Christ, and clothes the weakest with omnipotence. This faith is more than mere assent to truth. It is the touch of God's hand, a casting of human weakness on the Almighty arm of the living God. In its essence it is humble and trustful, and its fruit is grateful, adoring love. By faith Enoch walked with God; by faith Noah built the ark to the saving of his house; by faith Abraham went out from the land of his fathers to journey through the land of promise; by faith Moses endured as seeing the invisible God; it is by faith that men walk with God, overcome the world and journey heavenward.

## XL

### CLOSING OF THE GALILEAN MINISTRY.

Mark 9:30. "And they went forth from thence and passed through Galilee."

(Mat. 17:22-18:22; Mark 9:30-50; Luke 9:43-50.)

**A**FTER leaving Cæsarea Philippi, Jesus and his disciples traveled in the direction of Jerusalem, tarrying a week or two at Capernaum and other points in Galilee. To this period four events may be assigned, namely, the solemn and emphasized prediction of Christ's sufferings at Jerusalem, the miraculous furnishing of the shekel for tribute money, the contest of the disciples as to who should be the greatest, and the conversation concerning one who cast out demons in Christ's name, but did not follow with his disciples.

Christ's predictions concerning his own sufferings and death at Jerusalem are recorded by three evangelists. They all tell how profoundly the Master's words impressed the disciples at this time. Matthew says, "they were exceeding sorry," while Mark and Luke say, "they understood not the sayings and were afraid to ask him." On the Mount Jesus had talked with Moses and Elijah about his decease at Jerusalem, the event for which he had become incarnate. As he went steadfastly toward Jerusalem for the accomplishment of this great work of self-sacrifice, his words made a profound impression on his friends. When Moses came down from Mount Sinai

his face shone, and when Jesus Christ began his journey from the Mount of Transfiguration to Jerusalem his heart was so full of the great purpose of self-sacrifice that his words seemed to leave an indelible impression on all who heard them. The disciples did not know, and were afraid to ask, the meaning of their Master's words, but they felt subdued and were inexpressibly sad. They did not see just what the Master saw, but they lived under the shadow of a great coming tragedy.

As they were on their way to Capernaum the disciples did what seemed utterly incongruous and inconsistent with the deep sorrow and adoring reverence with which they had listened to their Master's words. They had not dared to ask their Master what was meant by his death and resurrection, but when they were separated from him they disputed amongst themselves as to whom should be the greatest. They still cherished visions of an earthly kingdom, and were contending for the high places. While their Master's thoughts were centered on his own great purpose of self-sacrificing love, the disciples were disputing about questions of petty selfish ambition.

When they reached Capernaum Jesus asked them what they had been reasoning about by the way. They were ashamed to tell him and held their peace. Nevertheless they did ask the general, abstract question, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

Instead of answering their general question in such a way as to satisfy the selfish ambition of any of the contending parties, Jesus took a little child and, setting him in the midst of them, said, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And



whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me: but whoso shall cause one of these little ones which believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of occasions of stumbling! for it must needs be that the occasions come; but woe to that man through whom the occasion cometh! And if thy hand or thy foot causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee; it is good for thee to enter into life maimed or halt, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into the eternal fire. And if thine eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; it is good for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire. See that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. How think ye? if any man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and go unto the mountains, and seek that which goeth astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth over it more than over the ninety and nine which have not gone astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish."

The earnest and extended answer of Jesus to the disciples' question was a most solemn and emphatic rebuke to their selfish ambition. It was no doubt put on record because it was for the disciples of Christ in all the ages. It rebukes all who selfishly contend for what seem to be high places in the Christian church, and emphasizes the real spirit of the kingdom of God.

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Mark and Luke indicate that John interrupted the discourse by saying, "Master, we saw one casting out demons in thy name and we forbade him, because he followed not us." This question may have been suggested by something in the discourse of the Master, or the question may have been asked after Jesus had completed his discourse. Jesus answered, "Forbid him not; for there is no man who shall do a mighty work in my name, and be able quickly to speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is for us. Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink, because ye are Christ's, verily I say unto you he shall in no wise lose his reward."

In their contest as to who should be greatest, and in their forbidding one to cast out demons in Christ's name because he did not follow with them, the disciples had shown that they failed to understand and possess the spirit of the kingdom. The lessons of the Sermon on the Mount and the more recent lessons concerning the need of humble self-sacrifice seemed to have been forgotten and Jesus had to go back to the fundamental principles and laws of his kingdom. Doing this, he sought to impress upon them the great lesson that sensual, temporal things are of little importance when compared with spiritual, eternal things. Their pride and selfishness were rebuked by contrasting it with the humility and trust of the little child; their false idea of the value of high places in the church was rebuked when they were assured that the loss of a right hand, a right foot, or a right eye is nothing when compared with the joys of heaven and the torments of hell in the eternal years.

This direct, practical and intense teaching is for Christian disciples in all ages. The besetting sin of Christians is the sin of self-seeking. This is the real source of nearly all the disgraceful contentions that have sprung

up in the Christian church. Eliminate the elements of sensual self-seeking, and the bitterness will fall out of theological controversies. The tendency to hinder others because they follow not with us is an unmistakable evidence that we have not the mind of Christ. Self-seeking, rather than zeal for God or for the truth, usually originates and perpetuates theological controversies.

The incident concerning the tribute money occurred at Capernaum, and probably preceded the discourse of Christ that we have been studying; but, since it is only recorded by Matthew, we place it after the discourse recorded by the three evangelists.

When Jesus came to Capernaum the collector of the temple tribute money asked Peter whether his Master would pay the half shekel. Peter replied that he would. When they came into the house Jesus asked Peter whether kings of the earth received toll or tribute from their sons or from strangers, and Peter answered, "from strangers." Jesus replied, "Therefore the sons are free; but, lest we cause them to stumble, go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a shekel; that take, and give unto them for me and thee."

This half shekel was a sum paid annually to the temple in Jerusalem by Jews of twenty years old and upwards. There may be some doubt as to Christ's meaning when he indicated to Peter that he was free from the tax and that Peter should have recognized the fact. Peter had confessed that Christ was the Son of the living God, but he had failed to see that, as the Son, he was not liable to this tax. This may or may not have been the meaning of Christ's words to Peter. The peculiar method adopted for securing the money to pay the tax seemed designed

to impress upon Peter the fact that Jesus was Lord of the sea as well as Lord of the temple.

This incident reveals at once Christ's lack of worldly wealth and his infinite resources, and, at the same time, it teaches the lesson of humble submission to injustice in order to prevent stumbling on the part of others. As the Lord of the temple, Jesus showed that he should not have been taxed for the support of the temple, yet he pays the tax. As the Creator of the universe, he owned all the silver and gold in all the world, yet he procured tribute from the mouth of a fish from the lake of Gennesaret.

## XLI

### ON THE WAY TO JERUSALEM

Luke 9: 51. "He steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem."  
(Luke 9: 51-62; John 7: 1-10.)

OUR Lord has entered upon the last six months of his mortal life, and, in order to study each event more intelligently, we pause and take a general survey of the whole period. The principal events of the greater part of this period are recorded only by the evangelist Luke, and he omits nearly all specifications as to exact time, and gives little information as to place, so that the chronological order of events is often uncertain. From the general narrative, extending from Luke 9: 51 to Luke 18: 14, as it is supplemented by incidental information contained in the gospel by John, it seems evident that Jesus made three journeys to Jerusalem during these last six months, and that he went once to Bethany, to the house of Mary, Martha and Lazarus, when he did not go to Jerusalem. Matthew, Mark and Luke agree in their accounts of what took place in Galilee, but Luke alone gives any information of Christ's movements from the time he left Galilee until about the time of his last coming to Jerusalem to the passover at which he suffered. Luke's narrative, therefore, becomes a connecting link between the narratives of the ministry in Galilee, given by the evangelists Matthew and Mark, and the account of the Judean ministry found in the gospel by John.



A careful, comparative study of the narratives given by Luke and John leads to the conclusion that Jesus went from Capernaum to Jerusalem to be present at the feast of tabernacles; that he then went to Peræa, on the east side of the Jordan, where he remained until the feast of dedication in the latter part of December, when he came to Jerusalem; that he again went to Peræa, where he remained until the death of Lazarus, when he came to Bethany, and then, after raising Lazarus, went to Ephraim, an unknown place, probably in Peræa also. The exact order of events during this period cannot always be determined, but this general view seems to make room for and throw light upon all the different incidents recorded.

Luke introduces his accounts of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem by saying, "He steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem;" while John tells us that he said to his brethren, "I go not yet up unto the feast, because my time is not yet fulfilled." At first sight these two statements seem to conflict, but when we examine them closely the seeming conflict disappears. Luke is speaking of our Lord's general purpose to go to Jerusalem and suffer there, even as he had told his disciples. Luke, therefore, could say that Jesus' whole course was in the direction of Jerusalem, or, "he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." John is speaking of an actual occurrence that indicated the unbelief and impatience of our Lord's brethren. These brethren, or relatives of Jesus, did not believe in him in any such way as to have an adequate conception of what was meant by the coming of his kingdom. They did, however, hope that Jesus would do something that would advance their own material and temporal interest; they were impatient at his delay and were seeking to provoke him to hasten his manifestation

of himself. They, therefore, said, "Depart hence, and go into Judea that thy disciples may behold thy works which thou doest. . . . If thou doest these things, manifest thyself unto the world." They, no doubt, wished Jesus to join the great company of worshippers who were journeying to Jerusalem; they would have him work miracles and become the great center of interest and the great theme of conversation; and, while they did not have real faith in him as the true Messiah, they probably did hope that his fame would advance their own interests. Jesus replied, saying, "My time is not yet come . . . . I go not up yet unto the Feast." These words and the record, "He abode still in Galilee," are altogether consistent with the statement of Luke as he says that he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem.

Jesus did not travel with the great company of worshippers as they proceeded toward Jerusalem, but started by a different route that lay across Samaria, and this occasioned another incident that is reported only by Luke. At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus had passed northward through Samaria, and had been welcomed as the Christ by the inhabitants of one Samaritan village; but, now, he is moving southward toward Jerusalem, and, when his disciples seek entertainment for him in a Samaritan village, the inhabitants refuse to receive him. The refusal was probably coupled with revilings and abuse, so that James and John were filled with indignation, and said to Jesus, "Lord, wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven and consume them?"

This refusal of hospitality had rekindled in the hearts of James and John all their hereditary animosity for the Samaritans, and if they had been able they would have destroyed the whole village more completely than Joshua had exterminated the Canaanites. The increasing op-

position to their Master had made them extremely sensitive; and, when they remembered his glory, as they had recently seen him talking with Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration, their indignation was kindled against these despised Samaritans. James and John were only human, but their Master was divine, and he rebuked them.

There may be doubt as to the genuineness of the record in King James' Version, in which Jesus is represented as adding, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; for the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them;" nevertheless, he probably said all this and much more. The suggestion of these two disciples was utterly inconsistent with the spirit of him who came into the world to seek and to save the lost, and not to punish the guilty.

After telling us that Jesus and his disciples went to another village for entertainment, Luke goes on to say that a certain man came to Jesus, saying, "I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest;" and that Jesus said in reply, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." Matthew tells us that this man was a scribe; but neither of the evangelists give any information as to why our Lord discouraged this would-be disciple. It is evident, however, that he saw in him something that needed correction, and he would not encourage him to become his disciple by permitting him to cherish false notions as to the character of his kingdom. Whether the man ever became a disciple is not known, for Luke proceeds to tell of another man to whom Jesus said, "Follow me;" and the man replied, "Lord suffer me first to go and bury my father." This man did not decline the invitation, but he did not accept it. He wished to be a disciple some time,

but not until after the death of his father when the old home would be broken up. To this one Jesus said, "Leave thou the dead to bury their own dead; but go thou and publish abroad the kingdom of God." Nothing more is known of this man, for the evangelist again proceeds to tell of another, who said to Jesus, "I will follow thee, Lord; but suffer me first to go and bid farewell to them that are at my house." To this man Jesus replied, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." This one also disappears without our knowing what became of him.

This brief record of these three men disappoints the reader. We would know what became of each one. But it may be only our curiosity that is not satisfied. Taking these three incidents together one can hardly fail to learn the great lesson our Lord would teach. In each and all of them Jesus demands a faith that finds in him a compensation for all worldly loss.

In view of the time and circumstances it is not strange that Jesus should place such emphasis on the necessity for whole-heartedness on the part of those who would be his disciples. He was on his way to Jerusalem to be betrayed, arrested, forsaken, denied, condemned, scourged and crucified. As he looked forward to his own self-sacrifice to save men, is it remarkable that he should warn his disciples, and his would-be disciples, against low and false ideas of the importance of religious duties? He was looking death in the face; he was feeling the power of an endless life; he was in the conscious presence of eternal verities and was thinking of the eternal years. He would not have any one follow him for the hope of earthly gain. He was about to lay down his own life, to be forsaken of his Father in order to redeem his people, and if any one would place temporal, earthly,

sensual affection above the interests of the kingdom of God, he could not be his follower. This record is adapted to deeply impress men with the infinite importance of their religious duties. God in Christ must have the first place or he will not have any place. Between atheism, that says there is no God, and the professions of religion that give to religious duties a secondary place, there is only an imaginary line. Both are practical atheism. The fundamental facts of the Christian religion summon men into the presence of the invisible God and the eternal world, and should make every one who believes them more enthusiastic than Peter, more devotedly loving than John, more consecrated than Paul. God and the eternal years are everything or they are nothing, and religion includes all the facts and experiences that concern our relation to God.



## XLII

### MISSION OF THE SEVENTY, THE GOOD SAMARITAN AND FIRST VISIT TO BETHANY

Luke 10:1. "Now after these things the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself was about to come."

(Luke 10:1-42; Mat. 9:36-38; 11:20-30.)

**I**NSTEAD of following the order of events as they are recorded in the tenth chapter of Luke, Farrar and others place the mission of the seventy, the parable of the good Samaritan and the first visit of Jesus to Bethany between the feast of tabernacles in September and the feast of dedication in December. The reasons assigned for doing this are first, our Lord's rapid and secret journey to Jerusalem to the feast of tabernacles would not afford sufficient time nor fitting opportunity for all these events. Second, the words of Luke 17:11, indicate that Jesus returned to Galilee at a later period to complete his ministry there.

These reasons, however, are not convincing. The sending out of the seventy, two by two, to visit every place Jesus was about to visit, could not mean that they would go directly in advance of him as he journeyed; for, going, two by two, the seventy could have made arrangements for him to visit a great many different places simultaneously. It is reasonable to suppose that they went to the different places that Jesus expected to visit afterwards. They could in this way visit many places

during the week or ten days as they journeyed to Jerusalem to the feast of tabernacles, while Jesus would be left to go his own way unattended by the usual multitude. The statement of Luke is not conclusive evidence that Jesus ever returned to Galilee. The words, "He was passing through the midst of Samaria and Galilee," may be more accurately rendered "passing along the borders of Samaria and Galilee." We, therefore follow the order indicated by Luke, and place the mission of the seventy, the parable of the good Samaritan and the first visit to Bethany, prior to the feast of tabernacles.

While Matthew, Mark and Luke tell of the sending out of the twelve, Luke alone tells of the mission of the seventy. If Luke had not recorded the choosing of the twelve there are points of resemblance that might have led to the inference that he was only giving a different account of the sending out of the twelve; but, since the same evangelist records both events, no such explanation is possible. Moreover, the expression "seventy others" evidently refers to the former sending out of the twelve.

The mission of the twelve and the mission of the seventy have several points of resemblance and some points of contrast. In both there is the command to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into the harvest; in both there is the assurance that the messengers go forth "as sheep amongst wolves;" in both the command to carry no purse is coupled with the assurance that "the labourer is worthy of his hire," and there is direction to salute the households into which they entered with the salutation of peace; in both power is given to heal the sick, and there is the assurance that it will be more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment than for the city that refuses to receive the divinely commissioned messengers of the kingdom of God.

The most important points of contrast between the commissioning of the twelve and the sending forth of the seventy are; the limitation of the field of the twelve "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel"; the greater authority and more definite instruction to the twelve; their going alone, while the seventy went "two and two"; the command to the seventy to salute no man by the way and the denunciation of Chorazin and Bethsaida. These points of contrast indicate the more permanent office of the twelve, the very limited time and need of haste on the part of the seventy.

Whether the seventy completed their work and made their report before Jesus reached Jerusalem to attend the feast of tabernacles is doubtful. It seems probable, however, that they did not, but returned at different times two by two as they went out. Luke gives his account of their return in connection with his account of their going forth, and we study it in the same connection.

Luke says, "The seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord even the demons are subject unto us in thy name." Their success astonished them. They had not only been the channels and instruments of divine power for healing physical disease, but they had exorcised evil spirits and had triumphed over the powers of darkness. Jesus did not reprove them when they rejoiced in the success of their mission, but led them to expect greater things as he said, "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven." The seventy had cast out demons in his name, but he would cast out Satan, the prince of demons, and would destroy his work. Then he added a remarkable promise as he said, "I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions and nothing shall in any wise hurt you." While this promise does not refer literally and specifically to scorpions and serpents, it does include all

evil powers, and is an assurance that he who casts out Satan controls all evil powers and will permit no real evil to come upon any of his faithful servants.

Having approved the rejoicing of his disciples in the evident success of their mission, Jesus warned them against depending too much on this evidence of success, as he added, "Howbeit in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

These words are evidently for all representatives of Christ in all the ages. To some of Christ's servants is given the great joy of seeing multitudes converted by their efforts, while many others labour just as faithfully and see little or no fruit. To some Christ gives the task of going forth and sowing the seed with tears, and to others he gives the joy of entering into these seemingly fruitless labours and gathering an abundant harvest. It is right to rejoice in evidence of successful labour for Christ, but all true labourers can and should rejoice more in the assurance that their own names are written in heaven, and in the confidence that the time is coming when he that soweth and he that reapeth shall rejoice together.

Luke goes on to say, "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit, and said, I thank thee O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding and didst reveal them unto babes." As he said this he seemed to have a vision of the future, in which he saw the travail of his own soul and was satisfied; for he proceeded to say, "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father, and no one knoweth who the Son is, save the Father; and who the Father is, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him." It is possible that he, at this time, used the

words recorded by the evangelist Matthew, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."

These words of Jesus to the seventy are adapted to comfort those who, in coming years, should be burdened with the thought that their labours were fruitless. Jesus laboured and the fruits of his own labours seemed very small. Discouraged Christian workers can come to Christ and learn of him who was meek and lowly in heart and can find rest unto their souls. Not now, but hereafter, the record made in heaven will be read and all errors of judgment will be corrected.

In these latter days, when external success is so applauded by men, Christ's words to the returning seventy seem to have peculiar significance. He did not object to their rejoicing, but he warned them against overlooking better reasons for rejoicing. To the meek and lowly in heart, to the Christ-like disciple there is a purer, deeper joy than can come from the external evidence of success. To the disciples who recognize these deeper spiritual things of the kingdom, comes the message, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things ye see."

In immediate connection with his account of the return of the seventy, Luke tells of a certain lawyer who stood up and tested or tempted Christ, saying, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

This question seemed like a practical, personal inquiry of one who was seeking religious light. It might have been suggested by what Jesus had said about things being concealed from the wise and prudent and revealed unto babes, or by what he had said to the seventy about having their names written in heaven. It is evident, however, that it was prompted, in part at least, by desire to test Christ's ability as a religious teacher.



In his answer Jesus recognized this lawyer's intelligence, as he said, "What is written in the law, how readest thou?" As a teacher of the law, the lawyer could not object to this answer of a question by a question, and he answered directly, giving the sum of the ten commandments in essentially the same words that Jesus used on two occasions, saying, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself." As a scribe, familiar with the law, he would probably combine Deut. 6: 5 with Leviticus 19: 18, as he gave this summary of the law. Jesus approved his answer, saying, "Thou hast answered right, this do and thou shalt live."

The lawyer had answered his own question and should have been satisfied, but he was not. He knew that he could not claim eternal life on this condition. He could not object to this law that demanded supreme love of God and love for his neighbour, and he did not seem so much troubled by his failure to love God whom he had not seen as he did about his failure to love his neighbour whom he had seen. In order to "justify himself," he said to Jesus, "Who is my neighbour?"

Jesus replied, "A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, which both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance a certain priest was going down that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And in like manner a Levite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion, and came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on them oil and wine; and he set him on his

own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee. Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbour unto him that fell among the robbers? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. And Jesus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise."

The lawyer had introduced the term "neighbour" and then had asked Jesus to define the term, and in the end answered his own question. He may have asked the question because he had an impression that Christ's teaching concerning brotherhood was broader than that of the ordinary Jewish teacher, or he may have asked it because his own conscience was not quite satisfied. Whatever his motive, we may be thankful that he asked and answered this question, for, by so doing, he has given to his own and every succeeding age, a beautiful and luminous parable.

In the parable Jesus may have had no special reason for putting the priest and the Levite in bad contrast with the Samaritan. The lawyer would not have recognized a Samaritan or gentile as his neighbour, and the parable is adapted to emphasize the great truth that love for our fellow men must not be limited by national or ecclesiastical lines. This unfortunate man was of no nationality. He might have been either Jew or gentile. His great characteristic was that he was in need of help. The priest and the Levite saw him and could have helped him, but they passed by on the other side. The Samaritan had compassion on the victim of misfortune and robbery, and, binding up his wounds, made provision for him until he should be able to care for himself. When the story was told and the appeal was made to the lawyer to say who

was neighbour to the man who had fallen amongst thieves, he could only give one answer, "he that showed mercy on him."

There is something in every human heart that compels approval of this judgment. In the sight of men, as well as in the sight of God, the despised Samaritan whose heart is full of real compassion must ever outrank the cold, heartless formalist, though he be robed priest or of the tribe of Levi. So long as this parable is accepted as Christ's answer to the question "who is my neighbour?" so long ecclesiastical position and professions of orthodoxy can never be reckoned as substitutes for brotherly love and Christian compassion. Compassionless Christians cannot claim eternal life either by law or by grace.

After recording the parable of the good Samaritan, Luke says, "Now as they went on their way, he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at the Lord's feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving; and she came up to him, and said, Lord dost thou not care that my sister did leave me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. But the Lord answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: for Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

We are accustomed to think of these three as the lifelong friends of Jesus, but it is probable that Jesus never entered their home until within six months of his death. He probably came here by invitation as he was on his way to the feast of tabernacles. During this feast he would not dwell in the house, but in a leafy booth according to the law. It is probable that the disciples had gone

into Jerusalem while Jesus turned aside to Bethany to enjoy the hospitality of this family. During the first part of the feast Lazarus would be in the holy city and, therefore, only Mary and Martha are mentioned as entertaining Jesus. Martha seemed to be the head of the household and received their honoured guest. Both sisters sought to honour Jesus, but in different ways. Martha showed her regard by great carefulness in serving, but Mary sat at his feet and heard with delight his words. The complaint of Martha was inconsistent with the true spirit of hospitality, nevertheless it enlists the sympathy of the average reader. The very brief record of this incident only enables the reader to see two different types of good women. But for our Lord's words, the average reader would be in sympathy with Martha. In the light of what he said in reply to Martha's complaint we can see no condemnation of great Christian activity, but there is criticism of restless, anxious, impatient activity concerning the external duties of religion when they interfere with receiving the deeper, better spiritual things that God would give to his people. The noise and bustle of formal worship and service must not be permitted to interfere with peaceful, trustful, spiritual communion with God which Christ describes as the good part that shall not be taken from us. Martha was not condemned for her carefulness so much as for her complaint. If Mary had complained to Jesus that Martha was impatient about trifles and incapable of appreciating spiritual things, it is probable that Martha would have been defended and Mary reproved. Each type may be both commended and reproved; commended for zeal or love, but reproved for fault-finding and thoughtlessness in regard to the burdens of others.

## XLIII

### AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

John 7: 14. "But when it was now the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple and taught."

(John 7: 10-52.)

**T**HE feast of tabernacles was observed in the autumn when all the chief fruits of the ground, the corn, the wine and the oil had been gathered. It lasted seven days and was followed by a day of convocation that may have been termed "the last, the great day of the feast." During the seven days the Israelites dwelt in booths and so many sacrifices were offered amid so great rejoicings as to give this feast a preëminent place amongst Jewish festivals. In the observance of the feast in New Testament times there was the ceremony of pouring out water of the pool of Siloam and the display of great lights in the court of the women.

When the people came together for the observance of this particular feast of tabernacles, the fame of Jesus had filled the whole land, and, while some said he was a good man, others said that he was deceiving and misleading the people. The discussion, however, was carried on secretly because the people feared the condemnation of their rulers, and the rulers feared the people. If, as we have inferred, the disciples of Jesus came directly to the Holy City while he turned aside to Bethany, they would hear discussions concerning their Master, but they would not be disposed to give any information concerning him.



The feast of the tabernacles was attended by many foreign pilgrims who could not come so easily to the feast of the passover or of pentecost. Many of these Jewish pilgrims, from Italy and Spain, in the west, from Media, Arabia and Persia in the east, and from other foreign lands, had never seen Jesus and would be eager to see one who had gained such a reputation as a miracle-worker, and had, at the same time, aroused such bitter enmity in the hearts of the Jewish rulers.

There were at least three classes who wished to see Jesus at this feast; his brethren, who hoped he might gratify their selfish ambition; the Jews, who hated him, and these foreigners who wished to satisfy their curiosity.

Jesus was probably in the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus during the first two or three days of the feast, but, about the middle of the feast, suddenly, unannounced he appeared in the temple and began to teach the people.

This was probably Christ's first preaching in the temple. He had cleansed the temple on a former visit, but there is no record of his having taught there publicly up to this time. His teaching, as well as his sudden appearance, surprised the people. As a boy twelve years old he had astonished the Jewish rabbis, and now the Jews marveled, saying, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" They were surprised that, one who had not attended a school of the prophets nor sat at the feet of any great teacher, should have such knowledge of the Scriptures and should be in that sense a man of letters.

Jesus explained the marvel and answered their inquiries by saying, "My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me." He declared also that the obedient spirit was the essential test of doctrine, when he added, "If any man willeth to do his will he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God or whether I speak from myself." This was equiva-

lent to saying that ability to grasp and understand the truth could not be gained from great teachers so long as there was a disobedient spirit, and, if there were an obedient spirit, great teachers were not necessary.

This was the beginning of a bitter controversy that can only be understood by recalling Jesus' former visit to Jerusalem when he cleansed the temple and healed the blind man on the Sabbath. By driving the greedy, sacrilegious Sadducees from the temple he incurred their bitter enmity; by healing on the Sabbath day and defending his action he touched both the prejudice and pride of the Pharisees. When he left Judea and taught in Galilee he came in constant conflict with Jewish rulers until it became an open secret that his enemies were conspiring to kill him. This murderous purpose had not been formulated or decreed by any court or council of the Jews, but was so evident as to be generally known. Jesus referred to it as he said, "Why seek ye to kill me?" The Jews answered saying, "Thou hast a demon; who seeketh to kill thee?"

In reply to this question Jesus referred to what had taken place on his former visit to Jerusalem and his healing on the Sabbath day when he said, "I did one work and ye marvel. For this cause hath Moses given you circumcision (not that it is of Moses, but of the fathers); and on the Sabbath ye circumcise a man. If a man receiveth circumcision on the Sabbath, that the law of Moses may not be broken; are ye wroth with me, because I made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath? Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment."

This argument seemed to satisfy a part of the people and they began to say, "Is not this he whom they seek to kill? And he speaketh openly and they say nothing

unto him. Can it be that the rulers indeed know that this is the Christ?" Nevertheless, the multitude who were asking these questions did not know their own minds, for they added, "Howbeit we know this man whence he is; but when the Christ cometh, no one knoweth whence he is."

To this confused answer Jesus replied, "Ye both know me, and know whence I am, and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. I know him; because I am from him and he sent me."

This was about equivalent to saying that they knew him in a sense, but that they did not know him as the messenger from God, because they did not know God. They did not recognize his real character as the Son of God and, therefore, had no real knowledge of him or of whence he came.

In the midst of the excitement, when the fickle multitude were divided and wavering between belief and unbelief, the Jewish rulers seem to have withdrawn from the crowd to some council chamber in another part of the temple, where they held a formal or informal conference. The result of this conference was the sending of officers to arrest Jesus. The coming of these officers seemed to suggest to our Lord's prophetic soul a future time when he would be arrested and killed, for he said, "Yet a little while I am with you and I go unto him that sent me. Ye shall seek me and shall not find me, and where I am ye cannot come."

These words added to the confusion of the Jews that were présent, and they said amongst themselves, "Whither will this man go that we shall not find him? will he go unto the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks?"

In the meantime the officers who came to arrest Jesus, seeing the excitement and fearing that his arrest might precipitate a riot and result in the calling in of the Roman guards, or for other reasons, failed to execute their commission, and returned to the chief priest and Pharisees without him. When they were asked why they had not brought him they said, "Never man so spake." The Pharisees therefore answered them, "Are ye also led astray? Hath any of the rulers believed on him, or of the Pharisees? But this multitude which knoweth not the law are accursed. Nicodemus saith unto them (he that cometh to him before, being one of them), Doth our law judge a man, except it first hear from himself and know what he doeth? They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search and see that out of Galilee ariseth no prophet,"

Nicodemus probably did not know that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, but he might have referred the Jews to the fact that Jonah, Elijah, and Nahum and others were Galileans.

The last great day of the feast found Jesus teaching the people, and about the time when the priest was pouring the water of Siloam from the golden pitcher into the silver funnel west of the altar, Jesus cried to the multitude "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters."

The intensity of this proclamation and the impression made on the multitude are indicated by the record that some of those present said, "This is of a truth the prophet"; Others said, "This is the Christ"; but others objected Jesus was only a Galilean and that the Christ was to come of the seed of David and from Bethlehem.

## XLIV

### THE WOMAN ACCUSED OF ADULTERY

John 8:7. "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."

(John 7: 53-8: 11.)

THE history of the woman taken in adultery is found in the received text, and includes the last verse of the seventh and the first eleven verses of the eighth chapter of the gospel by John. It is not found in the oldest manuscripts, and a majority of the most able and conservative Bible students in this day are of the opinion that it was not written by the evangelist John. Augustine and others who hold that it was a part of the original manuscript, would explain its not being found in the oldest existing manuscripts by saying that it was expurged because of the supposed license given to sin. It should be said, however, on the other hand, that the entire diversity from the style of narrative of John is regarded by many as sufficient reason for questioning its genuineness even if it had a place in the oldest manuscripts. Edersheim leaves it out of the history altogether, and says, in a foot note, that "it presents a veritable climax of impossibilities." He does not, however, produce any adequate reason for so sweeping an assertion. If it were found in the best manuscripts, there is no objection literary, ethical or historical that would warrant any hesitation in accepting it; and, in view of all the known facts, we are



inclined to believe that it is a substantially correct account of an historical event, even if it was not originally written by John the evangelist. The candid and intelligent student will not find in it the shadow of an approval of sin. In it all Jesus manifests the pure and loving compassion of one who came to seek and to save the lost. No event in his history places his spirit in more direct contrast with the spirit of the scribes and Pharisees than this event. Heartless, compassionless hypocrites, caring nothing for real purity, but filled with malicious and cunning hatred, saw in this wretched sinful woman a possible means of harassing and annoying Jesus Christ by compelling him to either approve her execution or to come in conflict with the law of Moses. (Deut. 22:22.) These Jews assumed the attitude of champions of purity according to the demands of the law of Moses, but they would throw on Jesus Christ the responsibility of making the application of that law in this particular case, for they inquired, "What then sayest thou of her?"

There was no doubt as to the woman's guilt, but, if her accusers were zealous for the righteous enforcement of the law, why had they not brought the man with the woman? Was this a miniature picture of the world's way of dealing with this sin in all the ages?

The mortal agony of a sinful woman kindled no compassion in the hard hearts of her accusers as they cunningly constructed this trap to bring the great Teacher into disrepute. It seemed as though Jesus must either approve the sentence, and, by so doing possibly involve himself with the Romans, or he must array himself against this law of Moses. At first he seemed either to hesitate or to disregard the appeal that had been made to him, for he stopped and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they pressed the question upon him, rais-

ing himself from his stooping attitude, and looking with divine dignity, not only into their faces, but into the most profound recesses of their impure, hypocritical hearts, he said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." His words were the sword of the Spirit, discerning the thoughts and purposes of the self-righteous accusers, and, while he again stooped and wrote on the ground, they passed out one by one, beginning from the eldest even unto the last. They had been summoned before the bar of their own consciences, and conscience made cowards of them all.

When Jesus again looked up, they were all gone and he said to the woman, "Where are they? did no man condemn thee?" she said, "No man, Lord." He then said to the woman, "Neither do I convict or condemn thee; go thy way; from henceforth sin no more." Misery and mercy were alone together. Compassion for lost sinners had brought Jesus Christ down into this sinning, suffering world, and it is only in the world's judgment that this woman had committed the unpardonable sin. To this sinner, as well as to others, Jesus Christ could bring pardon, and to this sinner, as to all others whose sins are forgiven, he said, "from henceforth sin no more."

This account of the woman taken in adultery may lack the evidence necessary to convince the devout Biblical critic that it is genuine; but it certainly cannot be excluded on ethical grounds. It reveals the compassionate spirit of Jesus in contrast with the heartless spirit of his enemies; and it teaches lessons that the purest and truest men and women of this generation will admit the Christian church should lay to heart. The law of Moses was a school-master to lead to Christ, and it may seem harsh, but it was not more cruel than the law that now

prevails in the social world and it was much more consistent. The words of Christ to the accusers in this case do not differ essentially from his words in the Sermon on the Mount, as he says, "Cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

Speaking of the fact that eminent fathers of the church ignore or speak of this narrative apologetically, Farrar says, "The mixture which it displays of tragedy and of tenderness, the contrast which is involved between low, cruel cunning and exalted nobility of intellect and emotion, transcend all power of human imagination to have invented it; while a picture of the divine insight, reading the inmost secrets of the heart and yet a divine love, which sees those inmost secrets with larger eyes than ours, furnish us with a conception of Christ's power and person too lofty to be founded on anything but fact."

## XLV

### JESUS TEACHING IN THE TEMPLE

John 8: 12. "Again therefore Jesus spake unto them saying, I am the light of the world."

(John 8: 12-59.)

**T**HE time and circumstances in which the controversy recorded John 8: 12-59, took place depend on whether the last verse of the seventh chapter and the first eleven verses of the eighth chapter be excluded. If this part of the record should be eliminated, the events recorded in the latter part of the eighth chapter occurred on the last day of the feast in immediate connection with the failure to arrest Jesus. If this part of the record be retained the events recorded in the latter part of the eighth chapter took place on the octave or eighth day of the feast, the day added to the original seven days. Retaining this record we assume that the real order of events is given in the received text and is as follows.

At the close of the controversy, on the seventh day, the people went to their homes and Jesus went out into the mount of Olives. Early next morning Jesus came to the temple and was asked to pass judgment on a sinful woman who had been brought before him either before or after he had been teaching in what was known as the "treasury" of the temple. Later in the day he removed to one of the porches or courts of the temple and continued to teach until the audience became an angry

mob, and he passed out, and they took up stones to stone him.

Jesus' first proclamation on this eventful day was probably suggested by his surrounding. On other occasions he had said, "behold the lilies," and "behold a sower went forth to sow," and, now he is near the great candelabra that during the feast of tabernacles shed forth its light over the entire city. From these lights he drew the imagery of his discourse, as he proclaimed himself the "light of the world." His words formed a sweeping proclamation. Only the divine Son of God could truly say "I am the light of the world." Certainly no mere man would put himself forward as the light of the world and declare truly, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

In this proclamation Jesus placed himself, not only above the other religious teachers of his own day, but above Moses and the other inspired prophets of the olden time. He claimed the preëminent and unique place that was only possible to the omniscient who knew all things in all their causes, consequences and relations. He was not willing to be reckoned *a light*, but would be acknowledged *the light* of the world. For any mere man to make such a claim would be the most presumptuous egotism. Moses, learned in all the wisdom of Egypt, Socrates, the sage of Greece, or Solomon, the wisest of men, were only a little in advance of their fellow men, and could not claim to be the light of the world. Jesus Christ leaves room for no other, past, present or future. Not much more than thirty years old, never having been two hundred miles from Jerusalem, he claimed to be the light of the world for all the ages.

It was not surprising that the Pharisees, who did not recognize him as the Son of God should say, "Thou



bearest witness of thyself, thy witness is not true." They could have objected to the testimony of a hundred human witnesses on the ground of incompetency. Only the omniscient one would be a competent witness in such a case. To this witness Christ appealed as he declared his own omniscience, saying, "I know whence I came, and whither I go." Then, telling the Pharisees that they did not know whence he came and whither he went, he added, "I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. I am he that beareth witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me." He called the only competent witness in such a case, and that is the all wise God revealing himself in the only begotten Son. Never before had he so fully proclaimed himself as one with the Father, the Messenger and Revealer of the Father. He claimed a unique place. He would not be classed with great teachers, but above them all, the light of the world.

The Pharisees met his claim by saying, "Where is thy Father?" They could not have explained what they meant by this demand. They had inadequate conception of the infinite God, and yet they knew enough to know that they could not with their mortal eyes see the Father. They knew that they were not to think of God as the heathen did, and when they said to Jesus Christ, "Where is thy Father?" they were less humble and reverent, but not less bewildered than Thomas when he, afterwards, said, "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us." They were in the presence of divine wisdom; they were not willing to see in Christ all that it was possible for them to see of the Father, and Jesus said to them, "If ye knew me, ye would know my Father also."

This probably ended the discussion in the Treasury, and the Pharisees permitted Jesus to pass out to one of

the porches of the temple without attempting to arrest him. There must have been an awe-inspiring power in his presence and in his words that restrained those who had in their hearts to kill him so that they could not touch him until his hour was fully come and he had finished his work. He had plainly and definitely proclaimed himself the Messiah, the great light to lighten the gentiles, even the Light of the world, to whom John the Baptist had borne witness. There could be no misunderstanding henceforth, for the Jews must either receive him as "the bread of life," "the living water," and "the light of the world," or they must reject him.

When Jesus resumed his discourse, probably on one of the porches of the Temple, he said again, "I go away, and ye shall seek me, and ye shall die in your sins; whither I go, ye cannot come." To these perplexing words the Jews now responded by saying, "Will he kill himself, that he saith Whither I go ye cannot come?"

They had such false and inadequate views of who their Messiah should be, and of what he should do, that they could not comprehend the meaning of Christ's words; and, while they were questioning as to his meaning, he explained the cause of their confusion by saying, "Ye are from beneath; I am from above; ye are of this world; I am not of this world."

The Jews could not rise above the sensual and the present; they could not believe in a spiritual kingdom of God, and, therefore, could not believe in and understand Jesus Christ, whose kingdom was not of this world. Some of them, possibly all of them, at times, felt that there was more in Christ's words than they could comprehend, and they said to him in real perplexity, "Who art thou?" But his answer brought no real light to their obscured vision. They could not realize that he spoke

to them of the Father; nevertheless, when he foretold his own death, saying, "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he and that I do nothing of myself," many seemed conscious of the presence of the invisible God, and seemed to catch such glimpses of the unseen and eternal world as led them to believe on him. For a moment they seemed to exercise real faith and experience the power that afterwards should go forth from an uplifted Savior. To these wavering ones, who seemed not far from the kingdom, to the Jews that believed on him and seemed to be his disciples, Jesus said, "If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

These words, that seemed designed and adapted to confirm the faith of the wavering, were the tests of their faith, and the wind that drove some of them away. They were offended by the promise that they should be made free, and said, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man; how sayest thou, ye shall be made free?" Their pride was offended. They probably did not mean to assert what was so manifestly false when they said that they were never in bondage to any man. They did not recognize their political bondage as interfering with the real individual liberty of the children of Abraham. They might be under the dominion of a heathen government, but their consciences were not enslaved. Our Lord seemed to attach this meaning to their claim of freedom, and said in reply, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, every one that committeth sin is the bond servant of sin."

He met them on their own ground. He had not been thinking of their bondage to the Romans, and had not been promising them deliverance from the Roman yoke

when he had offered them freedom. He had been looking at their real bondage, as the slaves of sin and the servants of the evil one, and he had offered them freedom from this real slavery, if they would continue in his word. He saw them in real slavery, and he added, "If, therefore, the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Then he proceeded to point out their sin and refute their claim to be in the real sense the children of Abraham. He said, "I know that ye are Abraham's seed, yet ye seek to kill me, because my word hath not free course in you. I speak the things which I have seen with my Father; and ye also do the things which ye have heard from your father."

Whey they had asserted that they were free, they had ignored the fact that they were in national subjection to Rome, and our Lord proceeded to talk with them of this higher liberty. They claimed to be Abraham's seed, but he showed that they were only in a natural, not in the real sense, Abraham's seed; that God was his Father and that they had another father whose spirit they manifested and whose works they did. When they repeated the claim to be Abraham's seed, Jesus said, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham; but now ye seek to kill me, a man that told you the truth, which I heard from God; this did not Abraham. Ye do the works of your father."

To these words of Jesus, that took them back further than Abraham, the Jews replied, saying, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, God." But Christ met this claim with the unanswerable argument, "If God were your Father you would love me; for I came forth and am come from God," and he added, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer in the begin-



ning and stood not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own for he is a liar and the father thereof. Because I say the truth ye believe me not. Which of you convicteth me of sin? If I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth the words of God; for this cause ye hear them not, because ye are not of God."

This discussion that began with an address to those who believed on him, had rapidly developed into open rupture and irreconcilable conflict. It was not merely a conflict between men; it was a conflict of light with darkness, of truth with falsehood, of God with the evil one. In this discussion Jesus revealed the two opposing powers, and proclaimed himself the representative of truth and of God the Father, while his enemies were in reality the representatives of falsehood, murder and the devil. He declared that the Jews did not receive his message and love him because they were filled with the spirit of enmity against God and truth.

To the charge that they were the enemies of God and the children of the devil, the Jews replied by accusing Jesus of being a Samaritan and having a demon. They certainly did not mean to assert that he was really a Samaritan in nationality; for they had called him a Galilean. The epithet, Samaritan, was about the equivalent of outcast, alien, heretic; and, followed by the declaration that he had a demon, was equivalent to saying that Jesus was the representative of falsehood and the evil one, and that he was not a true child of Abraham—that he was what he had accused them of being. Our Lord patiently denied their charge, declaring that he honoured the Father, and added, "If a man keep my words, he shall never see death." To this new and wondrous claim they replied, "Now we know that thou hast



a demon. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my words he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham . . . Whom makest thou thyself?"

Instead of giving a direct answer to this question, that he had already answered more than once, Jesus replied, "If I glorify myself my glory is nothing; it is my Father that glorifieth me, of whom ye say that he is your God, and ye have not known him; but I know him, and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be like unto you, a liar; but I know him and keep his word. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad."

It is not surprising that the Jews should nearly lose sight of the charge made against them in this new claim that Abraham, their natural father, had seen Jesus Christ's day. Abraham had lived about twenty centuries before Jesus was born, and yet Jesus declared that Abraham, their great and remote ancestor, had seen his day. In their surprise they could only say, "Thou are not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" To this question Jesus replied by making a still more astounding claim, as he said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was *I am*." Knowing, as they did, the wondrous revelation of God to Moses at Mt. Sinai, as the *I AM*, these Jews could hardly fail to see the meaning of our Lord's words. They saw a claim to divine, eternal pre-existence, and, as they heard this claim, which, to their unbelieving minds, seemed blasphemy, they took up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

## XLVI

### HEALING THE MAN BORN BLIND

John 9: 25. "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind now I see."

(John 9: 1-10: 2; Luke 11: 1-13.)

**I**N the eighth chapter of the Gospel by John we have an account of Christ's claiming divine attributes, and of the consequent outburst of Jewish wrath from which he escaped by hiding himself or by passing unobserved through the excited and angry multitude. Whether the healing of the blind man, and the discussion recorded in the ninth and the first part of the tenth chapters took place very soon afterwards may be questioned; they certainly did not occur the same day, for the octave of the feast of tabernacles was not the Sabbath, and the blind man was healed on the Sabbath day. Taking into consideration all the evident facts, it may be inferred, with a good degree of confidence, that the discussion in the treasury and in the porch of the temple, recorded John 8, took place on Friday afternoon, and that Jesus spent the night with his disciples outside the city, and that he returned to the temple on Sabbath morning. If this inference be correct, it is possible that the event recorded Luke 11: 1-13, may have occurred on the night that intervened between the teaching in the treasury and the healing of the man born blind.

On the evening of the eighth day of the feast Jesus passed quickly and quietly from the temple and out of

the city gate before sunset. Instead of going to the home in Bethany, it is probable that he sought solitude, that he might commune with the Father. This would correspond with the circumstances described by Luke, as he says, "And it came to pass as he was praying in a certain place, that, when he had ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples." The disciples probably came to him in the solitude of Olivet or elsewhere, and were specially impressed by the helpfulness of his prayer. He had been rejected, and his enemies, with ever-increasing malice, were seeking his destruction; he needed a friend to comfort, protect and help him. When his disciples heard him pray they realized that he had such a Friend, and hence their request, "Lord, teach us to pray."

The prayer given here does not differ in any essential from the form given by Matthew as a part of the Sermon on the Mount, though it is less formal and seems peculiarly adapted to the circumstances of the disciples at this particular time. They had seen John the Baptist taken away from his disciples, and knew their need to be able to pray. They had heard the suggestion that the Bridegroom, their own Master, would be taken from them, and that they would need a Comforter; they felt, no doubt, at this particular time, the premonition of coming sorrows. As Jesus answered their felt and expressed need, he, first of all, led them to recognize God as their Father. He then showed them that their first desire should be that their Father's name should be held in reverence, and that his kingdom should be established. He had come, not to do his own will, nor to seek his own glory, but to do the will and seek the glory of the Father. As they prayed they were to have the same

aims. Their service of God would lead to their rejection by men; it would stir up the wrath of men as that wrath had been stirred up against their Master; but, when they prayed, they must seek God's honor and God's kingdom.

Having given his disciples fitting words with which to speak to God, Jesus encouraged them, not only to pray, but to be importunate in prayer, saying, "Which of you shall have a friend and shall go unto him at midnight, and say to him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine is come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him; and he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot arise and give thee. I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will arise and give him as many as he needeth."

To this appeal to their knowledge of how importunacy moves men, Jesus added the promise, "Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Then, as though this threefold and repeated promise were not sufficient, Jesus again impressed his disciples with the great and encouraging fact that God was their Father, and that he was more willing to hear and grant their requests than earthly parents were to give good gifts unto their children. Both by the words of prayer and by the illustrations used, Jesus encouraged, not only the apostles, but all men to recognize God as the loving heavenly Father. He afterwards taught his disciples to ask the Father in his name; but this fact does not detract in the least from the full-

ness of this form of prayer for Christian men in all ages. Only through Christ do men really know God as Father, and when we come to him in Christ the highest and holiest form of address is, "Our Father, who art in Heaven. Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come." This is the Lord's Prayer, and is a fitting form for Christian prayer. It includes all that is expressed by the words, "in the name of Christ."

On Sabbath morning Jesus healed a man that was born blind. This probably occurred as he, with his disciples, was entering the temple on the morning of the Sabbath immediately after the close of the feast of tabernacles. John's account of this event indicates that this blind man was accustomed to solicit alms at a gate of the temple, and that he would be there on Sabbath morning, not to ask alms, but because it was the place where he was wont to spend his days. This blind man's history seemed to be known to the disciples, for they said to the Master, "Who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?"

This was a thoroughly Jewish question. Without sufficient reason for so doing they were accustomed to attribute peculiar suffering to particular sins. It was a common belief that the merits and demerits of parents descended to their children. This man's unhappy condition suggested a curious, speculative question, and the disciples said, "Who did sin that this man should be born blind?"

Both the sacred Scriptures and the operations of natural law affirm that the iniquities of the fathers are visited upon their children, that when "the fathers eat sour grapes, the children's teeth are set on edge," that certain specific sins of parents do result in certain specific diseases in their children; and men should seek



all possible knowledge of this great mystery by which the free will of the parent, to so great an extent, determines the destiny of his children. But the answer of our Lord to the question of his disciples shows that they had false views of the divine arrangement, and misinterpreted the sovereign will of God as it may be seen in the laws of heredity. The disciples wished to know the source or origin of this blind man's calamity, and Christ told them the purpose and meaning of it, as it entered into and formed a part of God's all-comprehensive plan, when he said, "Neither did this man sin, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

This does not explain the great mystery of suffering, but it does indicate the moral purpose that suffering may serve, and it does condemn the tendency to attribute peculiar individual suffering to a special judgment of God on account of particular sin. It does not contradict any facts concerning the divine law of heredity, but it throws light on the divine purpose in the outworking of this divine law.

In this unfortunate man Jesus saw an opportunity to do the work of God who sent him, and he said, "I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work. When I am in the world, I am the Light of the world." Then he spat on the ground, and, having made an ointment, anointed the blind man's eyes and directed him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. The man obeyed and was healed, and returned seeing.

Why our Lord made use of any external means in performing this great miracle is not revealed. He could have spoken the words of power without the use of any outward means, and, if he had done so, it would

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not have been so easy for his enemies to have convicted him of violating their laws of the Sabbath.

In the record of this event nothing is said of the blind man's asking or expecting to be healed. He did not even know who had healed him. As our Lord was passing by he saw the blind man and his disciples called his attention to him by asking what seemed a curious theological question. Nevertheless, there was evidence of a certain kind of faith in his obedience as he went and washed in the waters of Siloam. By his contact with the Saviour of lost men this man, who had by many been regarded as a monument of divine displeasure, became a special medium for the manifestation of God's sovereign love.

This miracle produced intense excitement in the neighbourhood where this man had spent more than forty years, and had been known as one born blind. He had as a birthright the preëminence that comes to the peculiarly unfortunate. In youth he had been known as "the blind boy," and he had grown into "the blind man" and now, that he has been suddenly and perfectly healed, he was the wonder of the community and the centre of attraction. The evangelist leaves his readers to fill out the picture as he tells in the simplest language the story of what followed the healing. First there was the questioning by his neighbours, "Is not this he that sat and begged?" Some affirmed while others said it was only a case of strong resemblance. When the man himself was questioned, he answered, "I am he." Then he told the story of his healing as he said, "The man that is called Jesus made a clay and anointed my eyes and said unto me, Go to Siloam and wash; so I went away and washed and received my sight." When he was asked where his benefactor was, he could not tell.

When the neighbours and others saw what had been done, they brought the man to the Pharisees, who asked him how he had been healed and they received the same answer. This probably does not mean that he was brought before any regularly constituted assembly of the Pharisees, but that he was brought to the Pharisees at Jerusalem who were by common consent recognized as leaders. These leaders were divided in their opinion as to the great Physician. Some of them said, "This man is not from God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath;" but others said, "How can a man that is a sinner do such signs?"

In their perplexity they recalled the man, and asked his opinion of Jesus who had healed him. The man answered promptly, "He is a prophet."

Instead of accepting this explanation, the Jewish leaders began to question the man's report of his being healed. They could not deny that he now saw, but they doubted whether he had been born blind. They were not willing to admit that Jesus had exhibited the credentials of the Messiah by opening the eyes of a man born blind, and they would not admit that this man had really been blind from birth until they had called his parents and asked them. The parents had not witnessed the healing, and they knew that, either by the act of some regularly constituted body or by common consent amongst the Jewish leaders, it had been decided that if any one should recognize Jesus as the Christ he should be unchurched, excommunicated or excluded from the synagogue, and they answered in such a way as to not incur this greatly dreaded excommunication. They said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but how he now seeth, we know not; ask him; he is of age; he shall speak for himself."

This left no reasonable room for doubt; for they had already asked the man twice and had received the same answer, and they had the evidence of their own eyes that the man now saw—that he had really been healed. Nevertheless, they called the man again, and, by whatsoever authority they possessed as recognized teachers of religion, they said, "Give glory to God; we know that this man is a sinner." They could not deny that gratitude and glory were due to some one, but would exclude Jesus from being recognized as the servant of God.

To this arrogant claim of superior knowledge in which they declared Jesus Christ a sinner, the healed man answered in such a way as to render ridiculous these Pharisaic pretensions, saying, "Whether he be a sinner I know not; one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."

The Pharisees could not fail to see that their own position was not only weak, but utterly foolish, and they were not willing to let the matter rest here, so they said again to the man, "What did he to thee?"

This question was a virtual acknowledgment of defeat. They had spoken the final word, when they said, "We know that this man is a sinner," but they opened the subject again by asking what Jesus did. The man answered with words and accents of impatience, saying, "I told you even now, and ye did not hear; wherefore would ye hear it again? Would ye also become his disciples?"

To this the Jews responded with revilings and claims of superiority that could only serve as an inadequate cover for evident defeat, when they said, "Thou art his disciple; but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God hath spoken by Moses; but as for this man, we know not whence he is." But again they were exposed



to ridicule, when the man replied, "Why, herein is the marvel, that ye know not whence he is; and yet he opened mine eyes. We know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and do his will, him he heareth. Since the world began it was never heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

To this the Jews could only answer by reviling, and, after saying, "Thou wast altogether born in sin, and dost thou teach us," they cast him out. This was the least form of excommunication, and three persons or even one might pronounce such a sentence. It is probable that in this case it was the act of a few who had been carrying on this investigation concerning the healing of this blind man, and it would exclude the healed man from the synagogue for the period of thirty days and prepare the way for the greater excommunication. It was the answer of intolerance and hatred to the protest of individual conscience and individual intelligence.

When Jesus heard that the man had been "cast out," he found him, and said, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" and, when the man answered, "Who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him?" Jesus said, "Thou hast both seen him, and he it is that speaketh with thee." Then this man, who had with great boldness and directness withstood and exposed the pretensions of the Pharisees, answered Jesus with profound humility, saying, "Lord, I believe," and he worshipped his benefactor. To the blind beggar, who, for more than forty years had been an object of pity, a great light had come. In comparison with him the Jewish rulers were the really blind, and Jesus said, "For judgment came I into this world that they which see not may see, and that they which



see may become blind." The Pharisees who were present and heard his words, said, "Are we also blind?" Jesus answered, "If ye were blind, ye would have no sin; but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

This controversy about the healing of the blind man seemed to open the way for our Lord's discourse in which he contrasts true with false religious teachers, and, by so doing, shows the essential difference between true and false religions. The scribes and Pharisees were the recognized religious teachers of the Jews. They were not accredited prophets, having special revelation from God, but they sat in Moses' seat, and they were recognized as interpreters of the sacred Scriptures. When Jesus Christ came, Nicodemus and others recognized him as a "Teacher come from God," and, if the scribes and Pharisees would retain their places as religious teachers, they must make some arrangement by which Jesus Christ would be associated with them and recognized as one of them. It was to their interest, and it seemed to be to his interest, that they should have a mutual understanding and unite their forces. When Jesus began his public ministry he did not enter the schools of these religious leaders, and they were jealous of him, regarding him as a rival rather than an ally. His popularity as a teacher seemed to detract from their preëminence and threaten their overthrow; but his teaching was so essentially different from theirs that they could not approve him without condemning themselves. By the instinct of self preservation they were moved to destroy him, and, when they could not deny that he had healed this blind man, they used their only argument that would have influence with the people;

they declared that he was a sinner because he had done this work of healing on the Sabbath day.

Jesus accepted the conflict that had been forced upon him and gave to the people the parable of the true and the false shepherds, in which he showed the essential difference between true and false religious teachers. He noticed two points of striking contrast; first, the good shepherd enters the sheepfold by the door, but the thief and robber climbeth up some other way; second, the sheep hear the voice of the shepherd and he calls them by name, leading them out, but the sheep will not hear the voice nor follow a stranger, but will flee from him.

The meaning of this parable as applied to religious teachers seems to us plain and easily understood. It indicates that the true religious teacher is called of God, knows the people of God, and is known of them; but the Jews to whom Jesus spoke did not understand him, and he changed the figure, making it more personal. What he had said proved him the good Shepherd if they would contrast his treatment of the blind man with the action of the scribes and Pharisees; but he changed the figure as he said, "I am the door of the sheep. All that came before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved and shall go in and go out, and shall find pasture."

If the Jews did not understand the parable of the good and bad shepherds they would hardly be able to comprehend the full meaning of this personal claim, or of Christ's declaration that all who came before him were thieves and robbers. They might think of him as a shepherd, but in what sense was he "the door of the sheep?" and who were meant when he said that all who came before him were thieves and robbers?

These words could only be understood by those who recognized Jesus as the Son of God, the only Mediator between God and men, the Way, the Truth and the Life. They carry us beyond scribes and Pharisees, beyond all merely human teachers, good or bad, and contrast Jesus Christ with the great adversary of men. When he said, "All that came before me are thieves and robbers," he certainly did not refer to Old Testament prophets who spake by his spirit; not did he refer primarily to the scribes and Pharisees, but to Satan, the arch enemy, who first seduced mankind, and to the human teachers in all ages who have been actuated by Satan's spirit. All who sought to enslave and destroy men by alienating them from God and leading them into any form of idolatry, gross or refined, were thieves and robbers. This included the evil one and all his agents. On the other hand, when Jesus Christ proclaimed himself "the door of the sheep," he assumed the place of Mediator between God the Father and sinful men—he claimed to be the unique reconciler of God to men, the door of entrance to God's fold and favor.

If Jesus had ended his discourse when he proclaimed himself the door, and declared that all who came before him were thieves and robbers, his meaning might have been obscure, but he went on to contrast the spirit of Satan and his agents with his own spirit, as he said, "The thief cometh not but that he may steal, and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly; I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep."

Here is the great essential difference between true and false religious teachers and between true and false religions. False religions and false religious teachers would enslave and destroy men for selfish ends; true

religion and true religious teachers aim to give men more abundant life. To comprehend the full meaning of these words is to comprehend the fall of man through temptation by Satan, and the redemption of the world through Jesus the Christ, as they are revealed in the Bible.

These words supply a crucial test of religion and religious teachers in every age. True religion is designed and adapted to elevate, enlarge and beautify human life; while false religions and false religious teachers would enslave and destroy men. The religion of Jesus Christ therefore offers to men broad, deep, eternal life as the sons of God. To heal this blind man Jesus had only needed to anoint his eyes and send him to wash in Siloam, but this was only an incident in the great mission that had brought him into the world. In order to give eternal life to his people, he must lay down his own life and must take it again. This he declared he had the power to do, and this was the great purpose for which the Father had sent him into the world. There is a sense in which every man has power to lay down his life and has power to take it again. He saves by losing.

This great and profound discourse of Jesus created a division amongst the Jews, and some said, "He hath a demon, and is mad, why hear ye him?" Others said, "These are not the sayings of one possessed of a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?" Only the sheep can hear the voice of the true shepherd, but even unbelievers in this age can hardly read these words of Jesus without being constrained to say, "Never man spake like this man,"

## XLVII

### DISCOURSE CONCERNING BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT

Mat. 12:31. "Therefore I say unto you every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven."

(Mat. 12:22-45; Mark 3:20-30; Luke 11:14-36.)

**T**HE feast of tabernacles was in the latter part of September and the feast of dedication was in December. Where Jesus spent the two or three intervening months is not known. Farrar assumes that he went back to Galilee to complete his ministry there, while Edersheim assumes that he went directly from the feast of tabernacles to Peræa and that he stayed in Peræa until the feast of dedication when he came to Jerusalem for a few days and then returned to Peræa. We have assumed that Jesus completed his Galilean ministry before coming to the feast of tabernacles, and it seems most consistent with all the known facts to regard him as going from the feast of tabernacles to Peræa, but tarrying for a time at different points within the boundaries of Judea. It is at least probable that the events described, Matthew 12:22-45, Luke 11:14-35 and Mark 3:20-30, took place as Jesus journeyed from Jerusalem to Peræa after the feast of tabernacles. His teachings at Jerusalem during the latter part of the feast had created intense interest and excitement. The Jewish leaders were not of one mind concerning him, some



saying he was possessed by a demon, while others protested that his sayings were not the sayings of one so possessed. This division of sentiment combined with his own personal majesty to prevent his arrest, and, no doubt, led many friends and enemies to accompany or follow him when he left the city. This explains the presence of the Pharisees as he taught and healed on his way to Peræa.

Jesus, with his disciples, was probably well on his way to Peræa when he healed a dumb and blind demoniac. This miracle precipitated a controversy; some were favourably impressed and said, "Is not this the Son of David?" Others declared that he cast out demons by Beelzebub the prince of the demons. In this controversy both Jesus and the Pharisees recognized a kingdom of darkness in this world that was under dominion of the prince of darkness. When the Pharisees accused Jesus of being in league with Beelzebub the prince of demons, if there had been no such prince Jesus would have said so, but, instead of denying the existence of such a being, he declared that Satan's kingdom was not divided against itself; that Satan was not seeking to undo his own work or destroy his own power.

The charge that Jesus Christ was in league with the powers of darkness and that he cast out demons by the power given to him by Beelzebub, was made frequently, but it does not seem to have been openly proclaimed even at this time, for we are told that Jesus, knowing the thoughts of the Pharisees, exposed, their utter unreasonableness and their deadly sinfulness. First, he showed that any such explanation was unreasonable. He had been undoing and destroying what the Pharisees had recognized as the work of Satan and he said, "If Satan casteth out Satan, he is divided against himself; how

then shall his kingdom stand?" The conclusiveness of this argument is evident at a glance. Jesus was doing the work of God and it was absurd to attempt to explain his power by saying he was in league with Satan, God's enemy. To make men demoniacs was the work of Satan, and if Satan were casting out demons, he would destroy his own work. Satan may lead men to do evil by persuading them that good may come, but he does not lead men to do good that evil may come.

One question of Jesus in this discourse has occasioned much dispute, and it should not be passed over unnoticed. He said to his accusers, "If I, by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore shall they be your judges. But, if I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come unto you." We do not know enough of the connection and circumstances to warrant us in saying to whom Jesus referred when he said, "by whom do your sons cast them out?" We cannot, therefore, determine the meaning and scope of this question. It may be said, however, that Jesus did not compare any system of imposture with his own miracles.

Having exposed the foolishness of attributing his power to do good to a league with Satan, Jesus proclaimed the great truth that the prince of this world could only be overcome by one who was stronger than he. Before any one can enter into the house of a strong man and spoil his goods he must first bind the strong man. There can be no compromise between the Prince of Peace and the prince of this world, no league of light with darkness. This world will never be delivered from the power of the evil one until a stronger than he come and bind him and then destroy his works.

Our Lord now turned from a defense of himself and uttered a most solemn warning. He declared that there was no neutral ground, that whosoever was not with him was against him. The good works that he had done by the Spirit of God his enemies had attributed to the evil one and he said, "Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world which is to come."

The Jews had often spoken against him, but now they were attributing his miracles of good to an evil spirit, and, by so doing, were deliberately cutting themselves off from all possibility of receiving the truth. The real cause of their unbelief was the enmity in their own hearts. They were the offspring of vipers, and could not speak good things nor recognize the good tree by seeing the good fruit. They were opposed to Christ because they were in league with the evil one, and under his dominion. The kingdom of God had come unto them, but they were hostile to it, and, persisting in their hostility, excluded the Spirit of God, who alone was able to make the tree good; they could therefore have no forgiveness either in this world or in the world which is to come.

At this point our Lord introduced a parable saying, "The unclean spirit, when he is gone out of the man, passeth through waterless places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will turn back to my house whence I came out. And when he is come, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he and taketh to him seven other spirits more evil than himself; and they enter

in and dwell there; and the last state of that man becometh worse than the first."

This parable could be applied to the nation or to the individual. Great joys and great sorrows sweep and garnish the soul, but the result will be a worse man if the soul is not so filled with gratitude to God and good purposes as to exclude evil. Great opportunities make men better or worse, and great opportunities unimproved leave the souls of men swept and garnished, that they may become the abode of either good or evil. The kingdom of God had come near to these Jews, but their high privileges might only work their deeper ruin. An individual or a nation overwhelmed by calamities may either draw nearer to God or rebel against him. The house is swept by calamities, but it may be made worse. An individual or a nation may be overwhelmed with blessings and opportunities; the house may be swept in this way, but the result may be great gratitude Godward and noble purposes manward, or it may be great pride Godward and great selfishness manward. Any one familiar with the history of the Jewish people could see the national application of this parable, and any one who has ordinary intelligence can see how it will apply to his own heart. By joys and sorrows our souls are swept and garnished, but they will not be kept empty; if the Spirit of God and of good does not take possession, evil spirits will come.

The discourse was interrupted at this point by a woman exclaiming in a loud voice, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the breasts which thou didst suck." Christ's words had touched her own heart and so stirred her own soul that she could not refrain from proclaiming what she so deeply felt. Our Lord replied, "Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and do it."



This woman's praise was better than the criticisms of scribes and Pharisees, but it was sentimental and ephemeral rather than spiritual.

The scribes and Pharisees seemed to be awed by our Lord's solemn warning, and they asked him for a sign. What they sought or expected as a sign they probably did not know. Jesus had wrought great miracles that should have convinced them that he had come from God, but they had attributed his power to Beelzebub, and they could do the same again if he should grant their request and show them other signs. He did not grant their request, but, addressing them as an evil and adulterous generation seeking after a sign, he said, no sign should be given but the sign of Jonah the prophet, and added, "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

In using these words he clothed with profound meaning a very remarkable, but seemingly unimportant incident in Old Testament history. At the same time he predicted the crowning miracle of Christianity, his own death and his resurrection on the third day. The scribes and Pharisees had asked for a sign, and he declared that in the fullness of time this great sign should be given. All other signs were but a preparation for this one. The great purpose of the incarnation, the climax of Christ's work was the laying down of his life that he might take it again. This sign was for all generations and would beget in the hearts of all true disciples a living hope.

After this subtle allusion to his own death and resurrection, an illusion that could only be fully understood in the light of future events, Jesus said that the Queen of the south, who came to hear the wisdom of Solomon,



and the men of Nineveh, who repented at the preaching of Jonah, would condemn those who refused to believe a greater than either Jonah or Solomon.

There is no good reason for regarding the words, recorded Luke 11: 33-36, as belonging to another time and spoken in a different connection. The fact that Jesus said something very like this in his sermon on the mount is no good reason for an inference that he did not close this discourse with these words. He was speaking especially to those who professed to have light, to those who professed to have clear vision, and he exhorted them to see to it that the light in them be not darkness, that their eyes should be single. As God's favored people they had the oracles of God, the light of revelation, and they should be lights in the world, but if their eyes were not single, the light in them would be darkness, and instead of letting the true light shine, they would obscure and conceal it.

## XLVIII

### BREAKFAST IN A PHARISEE'S HOUSE, OTHER INCIDENTS AND DISCOURSES

Luke 11:42. "Woe unto you, Pharisees!"

Luke 12:1. "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy."

(Luke 11:37; 13:17.)

IT is not possible to determine with any great degree of certainty either the precise time or the exact geographical location of the incidents recorded Luke 11:37-13:17. We have assumed that Jesus completed his Galilean ministry before going up to Jerusalem to attend the feast of tabernacles, and that he went from the feast of tabernacles to Perea teaching and healing by the way. It seems most probable, therefore, that the events described Luke 11:37-13:17, occurred about the time Jesus started to Jerusalem to attend the feast of dedication in December, or as he journeyed toward Jerusalem. If this assumption as to time be correct the geographical location might be either Perea, the borders of Galilee and Samaria, or the outlying districts of Judea.

Uncertainty as to time and place may aid rather than hinder our efforts to understand or interpret the mind of Christ as it is revealed in these incidents. This uncertainty may also aid us in learning the lessons that these incidents are adapted to teach. In this discourse Jesus says things that he said at other times and in

other circumstances, and, as these sayings have been, or will be studied elsewhere, it is not necessary to analyze them here. We, therefore, make only a very brief sketch or outline that may be helpful to those who may wish to take up all the events in detail.

In his controversy with the Pharisees and other critics at this time Jesus did not have any personal feeling of anger toward these particular Pharisees, and did not find pleasure in using words that wounded them. He could pray for these as he afterwards prayed for other enemies, "Father forgive them." Jesus condemned the religious system of the Pharisees insofar as it substituted outward forms for real vital piety and faith in God. He condemned their hypocrisy which caused an atrophy of all true ethical perceptions.

These controversies with the Pharisees and with others were not recorded for the purpose of enabling succeeding generations to sit in judgment on the Pharisees and other men of Christ's day. They are recorded for the purpose of warning all men everywhere and in every age against the besetting sin of all religious systems.

Luke introduces his account of Christ's partaking of the morning meal in a Pharisee's house, by saying, "As he spake, a Pharisee asketh him to breakfast with him; and he went in and sat down to meat." The expression, "as he spake" does not necessarily connect this invitation of the Pharisee directly with the preceding discourse of Jesus. It does not seem at all probable that a Pharisee should invite Jesus to breakfast with him immediately after the conflict concerning the healing of the dumb man. Moreover, this was the morning meal, and it is hardly possible that all the events recorded could have taken place before breakfast.

There is no good reason for believing that this Pharisee asked Jesus to his table in order to dispute with him or to insult him, but, when he saw that Jesus did not observe the religious rite of hand-washing, he marveled. He did not marvel merely because Jesus had done a thing that seemed discourteous to his host or other guests, but because he had committed what seemed to him a great sin. Had the washing of hands been a mere matter of custom, having no religious significance, Jesus, no doubt, would have conformed to the custom, but it was a part of a system of religious formalism that destroyed the very life and usurped the place of religion. To observe this rite was to seem to sanction the traditions that had made void the law of God and had led men to neglect justice, judgment and mercy.

The Pharisee's astonishment was probably indicated by some word or act while at the table or afterwards, so that Jesus felt constrained to correct and rebuke him. He, therefore, said to him, "Now do ye Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of extortion and wickedness. Ye foolish ones; did not he that made the outside make the inside also?"

In the discourse that followed in which Jesus exclaimed, "Woe unto you Pharisees!" and "Woe unto you lawyers!" he expressed his abhorrence of the substitution of outward forms of religion for real and vital godliness. Jesus approved, both by precept and example, the careful observance of divinely appointed ordinances, and he only rebuked the self righteous hypocrisy that multiplied religious forms and substituted them for vital piety.

In all this Jesus rebuked not only those who were present, but all religious teachers in all ages who exhibit

the same spirit. Self righteous formalism that makes clean the outside and substitutes formal religious observances for justice, judgment and mercy, is probably as prevalent in the Christian church now as it was then. Selfish, scheming manipulation in order to secure the high places in religious organizations, assemblies, councils and conferences, are, no doubt, as prevalent today as they were in Christ's day, and his rebuke to the Pharisee is as much needed now as it was when these words were first spoken. When he said "Woe unto you Pharisees for ye love the chief seats in the synagogue and the salutations in the market places," he rebuked those who in all ages selfishly scheme and manipulate in order to secure the high places in religious organizations. When he said, "Woe unto you lawyers, for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers," he rebukes all who interpret God's law harshly for others while not applying it to themselves.

After recording the discourse in the Pharisee's house, Luke goes on to say, "In the meantime, when the many thousands of the multitude were gathered together, inasmuch that they trode one upon another he began to say unto his disciples first of all, beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy."

This assembling of the multitude probably took place while Jesus was breakfasting in the Pharisee's house. His condemnation of the Pharisees had been direct and intense, not because he was angry with them, nor because he regarded them as his personal enemies, but because he wished to correct their false conception of religion and their evil practices. When he warned his disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees, he warned them against the Pharisaic system. The motive power



of the Pharisees was selfishness. It took the form of pride, envy, hatred, malice, and other spirits of evil that would not bear the light. The essential mark and leaven of the Pharisee was hypocrisy. He was cunning, subtle, deceitful. He loved concealment and was doing what he did not seem to be doing. He could not be frank, honest, transparent. Against this deadly leaven of hypocrisy, Jesus warned his disciples and declared that the time was coming when all secrets should be revealed. He showed them that there was no necessity for concealing any good thing, and that they were not to fear men, who could only kill the body. He declared that their heavenly Father knew all secrets and knew the number of the hairs of their heads, and would protect them.

These words of Jesus were spoken to his disciples, including the whole multitude who in any way professed to be his followers. They are for the Christian church in every age. The Christian church should have no part in any work that cannot bear the light. To every disciple in every age Jesus says "beware of hypocrisy." Do not conceal right purposes, however unpopular they may be. God rules, and you can afford to be known as the friends of right and truth even when right and truth seem weak. Do not harbor wrong motives and try to conceal them, for the time is coming when every secret shall be revealed. Do not seem to be what you are not. If you believe in Christ do not play the hypocrite by failing to confess him before men.

To this warning against the leaven of the Pharisees, our Lord added a warning against blaspheming the Holy Ghost. He connected this warning with the exhortation to not conceal their real character. The man who conceals his own motives is ever ready to believe that other men are concealing their real motives. It follows

that the man who practices any kind of hypocrisy is in special danger of committing this sin against the Holy Ghost which is the culmination of the works of darkness.

Amongst the number of those who heard the Master's words was one man who did not feel that he was touched by the warning against the Pharisaic spirit. He probably made no pretensions that he was more religious than others. He never thought much about religion, but he had a controversy with his brother about the division of an estate. He thought that he had a just claim and he thought our Lord's clear vision would enable him to see the justness of the claim. Obsessed by his one idea, he exclaimed, "Master bid my brother divide the inheritance with me." Jesus replied, "Man who made me a judge or divider over you?" Then he said to the multitude, "Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things that he possesseth."

He enforced this exhortation with a parable, saying, "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he reasoned within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have not where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my corn and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry. But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be?"

In the rebuke of this man and in the exhortation to the multitude, Jesus spoke to men of all generations. The great besetting sin of humanity is the love of money which is a root of all evil, and covetousness which

is idolatry. This sin results from looking at the things seen and temporal and losing sight of the unseen, spiritual and eternal things that are vastly more important for immortals.

After again assuring his disciples that they were only to consider fear of their heavenly Father, Jesus proceeded to show the attitude they should have while they were in this world. They were to be like men looking for the coming of their Lord; they should be willing to wait for his return when they would be rewarded for their faithfulness. In this part of the discourse he taught his disciples in all ages that they are not to be discouraged if their heavenly Father permits them to suffer wrongs for a time. They are watchmen, waiting for their coming Lord, who will reward their faithfulness in due time. They are to look to the future and live in hope of the future. They do not need to take up the cry, "Why doth the way of the wicked prosper?" They are not to be discouraged if they see good men suffering adversity in this world. They are not to murmur if they are called to suffer for well doing. All this will be changed when their Lord comes. If they will be faithful, all will be well, for in such time as they think not the Son of man cometh.

This part of the discourse seemed to describe so accurately the condition of the twelve that Peter said, "Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us or unto all?" Our Lord answered that it was for every faithful and wise steward; and he promised a blessing to the servant whom his Lord at his coming should find faithfully performing his duty.

He added a warning against the servant who should say in his heart, "My Lord delayeth his coming," and should begin to usurp authority and abuse his power. To

the faithful servant his Lord will come at such time as he thinks not and he shall have rewards for his faithfulness. To the unfaithful his Lord will come when not expected and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the unfaithful. The real reward of both is in the future. If things seem inequitable now the faithful should not despair nor murmur, and the unfaithful should not flatter himself that he is secure.

Having answered Peter's question, Jesus proceeded to speak of his own mission in the world. He declared that he was the Prince of Peace, yet he came, not to send peace, but a sword; he came to kindle a fire that could only be quenched when all falsehood and sin had been consumed. He declared that he had a baptism to be baptized with, a baptism of fire, and was straitened till it be accomplished. He proclaimed himself a leader and the victim in that baptism of fire that would secure the redemption of a lost world.

The disciples and all who heard him must have felt that they were approaching some great tragedy, and there were some present, who, by some subtle law of association, told of Pilate's slaying a company of Galileans when they were offering sacrifice so that their blood mingled with the blood of their sacrifice.

When and where and in what circumstances this tragedy was enacted, we do not know, but there seemed to be something in our Lord's discourse that led some of the multitude to speak of it in this connection. They may have thought these people suffered death because they had been guilty of some gross sin, and may have been comforting themselves with the thought that they were not depraved sinners, and that they would escape when the coming tragedy would be enacted. All this is indicated by Christ's words when he said, "Think ye that



these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered these things? I tell you nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." The Perean Jews may have thought, too, that the judgments Jesus predicted were for Galileans rather than for the people of Jerusalem; if so, our Lord dissipated that error by reminding them of the eighteen dwellers at Jerusalem on whom the tower of Siloam fell, and he added, "Think ye that they were offenders above all the men that dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Our lack of any definite and reliable information concerning either of these events is adapted to fix our attention on the error Jesus would condemn, and on the truth he would teach. It was a prevalent belief that special suffering indicated peculiar sinfulness. Jesus taught that this was not true. He taught that calamities coming upon certain men are no evidence that these men have been guilty of any special sins, for all are sinners, and all will perish if they do not repent.

This admonition is followed by a parable that can be applied either to the Jewish nation or to the individual. The Jews, trusting to their high privileges as the people of God, could hardly be convinced that they were to be the subjects of divine displeasure. They had been taught that God would chastise them as a nation, but they could not believe that he would reject them and put them on a level with other nations, since they were the seed of Abraham and heirs of the promise. To them our Lord said, "Except ye repent ye shall perish," and then he told them of the favored fig tree yielding no fruit, and the resolution to cut it down. For three years the owner of the vineyard had looked for fruit on this tree, but had found none. This had been the history of Israel, and



especially during the three years of our Lord's ministry. It was spared a little longer, and given another opportunity, and we know the result.

This parable in its connection may apply with still greater force to the individual who enjoys peculiar religious privileges, but yields no spiritual fruit. He may be spared when others are cut down, but it is only an extension of mercy for a time, and, if he does not repent, he will surely perish. The parable, as well as the address that precedes it, emphasizes the fact that great privileges and opportunities, as well as great calamities, do not of themselves indicate righteousness or unrighteousness of men. God gives great opportunities to the wicked while they are in the world, and he some times permits great calamities to come upon the righteous.

The next incident recorded by Luke is introduced without any definite information as to time or place, except that it was on a Sabbath day and in a synagogue. The ruler of the Synagogue, either of his own choice or by constraint, had permitted Jesus to teach in the Synagogue on the Sabbath; but when, by a word, and the laying on of his hands, Jesus healed a woman, who had for eighteen years been bent double by "a spirit of infirmity," the ruler of the synagogue was filled with indignation. This man's cold, compassionless, selfish heart felt no thrill of joyful gratitude when he saw this chronic sufferer standing upright and praising God for her deliverance. He could not conceal his self-righteous anger by keeping silent, but said to the multitude, "There are six days in which men ought to work; in them, therefore, come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath." But the Lord answered, "Ye hypocrites, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall and lead him away to watering? And ought not this

woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, to have been loosed from this bond on the day of Sabbath?"

The answer was conclusive and overwhelming, and it was accepted by the multitude. The stupidly censorious ruler of the synagogue had not directly attacked Christ for performing the miracle, but had condemned the woman for coming to be healed or for permitting Christ to heal her on the Sabbath, but this answer vindicated the woman, the multitude, and Jesus himself, leaving the Pharisee an unmasked, self-condemned hypocrite.

It makes very little difference when, where or how frequently our Lord said all that the evangelist has put on record here. The teachings are for all men in every generation. They all reveal the mind of Christ. He was frank, transparent and absolutely sincere and true. He lived in the conscious presence of spiritual and eternal verities. He looked for reward, not in time, but in the eternal years. He taught the Pharisees, the disciples, the multitude, and teaches all men in all ages and places to be like himself.

## XLIX

### JESUS AT THE FEAST OF THE DEDICATION

John 10:22. "And it was the Feast of the Dedication at Jerusalem; it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in Solomon's porch."

(Luke 13:18-22; John 10:22-39.)

**A**FTER giving an account of Christ's answer to the Pharisee who had criticized his healing an afflicted woman on the Sabbath, Luke records the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven, and then, speaking of Jesus, says, "He went on his way through cities and villages, teaching and journeying on unto Jerusalem."

We assume that this general statement refers to the the journey from Perea to Jerusalem to be present at the feast of dedication. The record found in the gospel by John connects what occurred at the feast of tabernacles directly with what took place at the feast of dedication, and one might infer that Jesus had not been away from Jerusalem during the more than two months that separated these two feasts; but there is good reason for believing that the evangelist Luke supplements John's record at this point. No one can say confidently how much of the record found in Luke 9:51-18:15 preceded the feast of dedication, but there is good reason for believing that the evangelist Luke indicates the real order of events at this point, and we proceed on this assumption.

The feast of the dedication was instituted by Judas Maccabæus about 164 B. C., and commemorated the

rededication of the temple after it had been desecrated by Antiochus. It had no authority nor obligation as a divine institution, but was recognized as a day of religious devotion and national thanksgiving. It lasted eight days, and during this time the homes of the people, as well as the temple, were illuminated every night.

Jesus left an excited and divided multitude in the temple when he closed his discourses at the feast of tabernacles, and, when he appeared again at the feast of the dedication, the Jews gathered about him as he walked in Solomon's porch. They reopened the controversy by saying, "How long dost thou hold us in suspense? If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly."

If this question had been asked by only one person we might hope to determine the motive that prompted it; but it was asked by the multitude, and there were probably different motives. Jesus had told the Jews who he was so plainly that they had taken up stones to stone him, and they did not need to ask again for such information as would enable them to decide a question of doubt. He knew that they were asking this question in order to get more definite accusations against him and he replied, "I told you, and ye believe not; the works that I do in my Father's name, these bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. My Father, which hath given them unto me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

These last words so enraged the Jews that they again took up stones to stone him. Their anger was conclusive proof of the truth of the charge that Jesus had just made.

In striking contrast with their anger and excitement, Jesus was as fearless and calm as when he quieted the winds and the waves on Galilee. He said, "Many good works have I showed you from the Father. For which of those works do ye stone me?"

The Jews retorted, "For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because thou, being a man, makest thyself God."

Jesus did not withdraw his claim nor did he hint that they had misunderstood his words, but he did deny the charge that it was blasphemy for him to say, "I am the Son of God." On the other hand, he declared that his works were the works of the Father, and that they confirmed his claims. He added, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do them, though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father."

This language cannot be misunderstood. No honest man can accept these words in their connection, as the very words of Christ, without confessing that he claimed to be the Divine Son of God. The Jews had not misunderstood him, but they refused to admit his claims, and, when they sought to take him, he went forth out of their hands. There was no longer any room for doubt. He must be accepted as the Son of God, or he must be rejected as a blasphemer for making himself equal with God.



## L

### FROM THE FEAST OF THE DEDICATION TO THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

John 10: 40-42. "And he went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John was at the first baptizing; and there he abode. And many came unto him; and they said, John indeed did no sign, but all things whatsoever John spake of this man were true. And many believed on him there."

(Luke 13: 18-17: 10; John 10: 40-42.)

THE evangelist John, having given an account of our Lord's controversy with the Jews as he walked in Solomon's porch at the feast of the dedication, says, "He went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John was at the first baptizing; and there he abode many days." Then, after saying that many believed on him, John proceeds to give an account of Jesus' return to Bethany and the raising of Lazarus. We have no definite information as to the exact time when Lazarus was raised from the dead, but it was at least two months after the feast of the dedication, and we assume that the Gospel by Luke, 13: 18-17: 10, covers this period concerning which the other evangelists are silent.

In a preceding chapter we assumed that Luke's account of our Lord's journeying to Jerusalem, Luke 13: 22, referred to his going to the feast of the dedication. This could only be done by taking it out of the connection in which that evangelist records it; but it seems more rea-

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sonable to do this than to regard it as describing the journey of Jesus to Bethany when he went to raise Lazarus from the dead. It is possible, though, that this incidental statement of Luke covers the whole latter period of our Lord's life when his general course was toward the consummation of his work at Jerusalem. When he was on the Mount of Transfiguration he talked with Moses and Elijah about his decease which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem; when he was warned against Herod's purpose to kill him, he rejected the advice to escape from Herod, and, at the same time, said, "it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." It seems evident, therefore, that in our Lord's own mind the whole period from the Transfiguration to the Crucifixion was a "journeying on unto Jerusalem," and we study these events recorded by Luke without any reference to their exact chronology.

The parables of a former period were symbolical, presenting unseen, spiritual, heavenly realities by means of visible, earthly emblems. The parables of this period are practical and, in a sense, typical and hortatory. To this class belong the parables of the good Samaritan, of the friend at midnight, of the rich fool, of the servants watching and of the barren fig tree, concerning which we have already spoken. The parable of the mustard seed, though recorded here, seems to belong to the first series, and is recorded also by Matthew and Mark, and the same is true of the parable of the leaven recorded also by Matthew.

Following the order of events as they are recorded by Luke, we first have an account of some one saying to Jesus, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" To this curious question our Lord replied that the time would come when the door of the kingdom would be closed, and

added an exhortation to strive to enter in at the strait gate, since many would seek to enter in and not be able.

This was only a personal application of what had already been said in the Sermon on the Mount; but it seems more impressive here because it is more personal. It applies the sword of the Spirit to all who can only be interested in curious religious questions and are trusting to the fact that they enjoy peculiar privileges without improving them. It seems evident that the man who asked the question was a Jew, that he was resting on that fact as a ground of personal security, and he is told that there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when they shall see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, while they themselves are cast out. Our Lord's answer emphasizes the practical truth that, not our privileges, but the use we make of them will determine our destiny. To all those who can only boast that Jesus Christ has taught in their streets, or that they have had gospel privileges, he will say at the last, "Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity."

After recording this intensely earnest and solemn admonition, Luke goes on to say, "In that very hour, there came certain Pharisees, saying to Jesus, Get thee out and go hence, for Herod would fain kill thee."

The motive of these Pharisees can only be inferred from what we know of the Pharisaic character and from our Lord's answer. The Pharisees may only have sought to harass and annoy Jesus because he had proclaimed their boasted descent from Abraham as of no value unless they rightly used their privileges; or, they may have hoped that he would be alarmed and seek concealment outside of Herod's jurisdiction, and, by so doing, forfeit the confidence of the multitude; or, they may have thought to provoke Jesus to say something that they could

use against him. Whatever their motive, our Lord's answer was remarkable. If his divine and boundless compassion ever gave place to contempt, it was when he had to do with or speak of Herod Antipas. When these Pharisees told him that Herod would fain kill him, he replied, "Go and say to that fox, Behold I cast out demons and perform cures to-day, to-morrow and the third day I am perfected." Afterwards, when he was on trial before Pilate he treated his judge with dignified compassion, but when he stood before Herod he would not utter a word. Herod was a weak, cunning, capricious, sensual, superstitious despot—the worst specimen of a bad family. He had murdered John the Baptist; he was living in adultery with his brother's wife, but was still making some pretensions to be religious; and now his name is used to threaten and, if possible, alarm the Christ of God. If any one could transform divine compassion into contempt, this was the man, and Jesus spoke of him as he spoke of no other. He neither feared nor respected such a man, and when he spoke of him he called him "that fox."

But our Lord's answer was for the Pharisees as well as for Herod, and he added, "How be it I must go on my way to-day and to-morrow and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem. O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her own brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate; and I say unto you, Ye shall not see me until ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

If these Pharisees sought to frighten Jesus by telling him of Herod who had killed John the Baptist, they were

disappointed, for Jesus told them plainly that neither Peræa nor Galilee should have the infamy of killing the Christ of God. He had nothing to fear from Herod Antipas, but he must hasten to Jerusalem to drink the cup that he had accepted as the Redeemer of his people. It was when he thought of Jerusalem that he was confronted with the great tragedy for which he became incarnate.

About this time, on a Sabbath day, Jesus went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees to eat bread. His invitation to dine with this Pharisee was not prompted by real friendship, for the evangelist adds, "they were watching him." It is possible that the real motive of the Pharisee was a desire to ensnare him. However this may be, these Pharisees knew of Christ's healing on the Sabbath day, and in this Pharisee's house there was a special opportunity to again do as he had already done elsewhere, for there was before him a certain man who had the dropsy. Jesus knew the sentiments of the Pharisees without asking, but he gave them an opportunity to commit themselves, as he said, to the lawyers and Pharisees present, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?" Had they been really desirous that their idea of Sabbath keeping should be respected, they would have answered this question, but they were silent. They wished Jesus to do what they regarded as Sabbath breaking in order that they might accuse him. Their zeal for the Sabbath was only a cloak for their jealous, envious hatred of Jesus, for they held their peace when they might have hoped to prevent what they regarded as a violation of the law of the Sabbath.

Our Lord then healed the man, and defended his action by saying, to those who had witnessed the miracle, "Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a



well, and will not straightway draw him out on the Sabbath day?" The Pharisees could not answer. To condemn Christ's act was to condemn themselves.

After this episode, which probably occurred before the company had taken their places at the table, our Lord, when he marked how the guests chose the chief seats, said, "When thou art bidden of any man to a marriage feast, sit not down in the chief seat; lest haply a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him, and he that bade thee and him shall come and say unto thee, Give place, and then thou shalt begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest place, that when he that hath bidden thee cometh, he shall say unto thee, Friend, go up higher; then shalt thou have glory in the presence of all that sit at meat with thee."

This admonition certainly does not commend a false humility, that assumes the humble position with the mind fixed on the high position. He who rightly honours the giver of the feast will delight in taking the position assigned him by his host, whether it be the lowest or the highest. If he have supreme respect for the host, he will esteem the lowest place sufficiently honourable. If it is to be a scramble for the highest places without regard to the judgment of him who gives the feast, there is no real honour anywhere. This parable commends true humility, that will not trouble itself about distinctions of place, but will with loving gratitude take the place assigned. Every man-made feast is defective, since the host, as well as the guests, may be vain and foolish; but in the gospel feast, in the kingdom of God, humility is the cardinal virtue because it realizes that only God is great.

That this is the correct interpretation of Christ's words to the guest is evident from the admonition addressed to

the host. The host, as well as his guests, may, and probably did in this case, exhibit vanity and selfishness by his invitations, and our Lord said to him, "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest haply they also bid thee again and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, bid the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; and thou shalt be blessed; because they have not wherewith to recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just."

In these words to host and invited guests, Jesus contrasted the spirit of selfishness and vanity with the man ennobling spirit of the gospel, even in the matter of giving and attending a supper, and exhorted all to rise above the present and look forward to the resurrection of the just.

At this point, one of the guests interrupted his discourse, saying, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God."

The motive that prompted this remark is evident. Our Lord's words were so practical and so personal as to interfere with the comfort of the host and his guests. This man sought to relieve the tension by a religious platitude. He sought to harmonize the company by complimenting our Lord's picture of the ideal feast, the feast of the kingdom of God.

In response to this remark Jesus gave the parable of the great supper. This parable was a warning against pious cant and self righteous complacency of the descendants of Abraham. God had prepared the great supper, and, in the Old Testament revelation and ordinances had bidden the Jews, and especially those who read and expounded the prophecies and interpreted the types, but when the preparations were completed and the servants

announced the feast, those who had enjoyed the highest privileges refused to come. They assigned different reasons for their refusal, but the reasons were essentially the same in that they all undervalued the feast and refused to come because they set a higher value on something else. With one it was a matter of business, and he said, "I have bought a field;" with another it was a matter of judgment, and he said, "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them;" with another it was a matter of pleasure, and he said, "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come;" but, with all, the real excuse was they did not see anything sufficiently attractive in the feast. They did not reverence the host. It was a vivid picture of the priests, the scribes, the Pharisees, the rulers of the Jewish people, as they rejected Christ and the gospel. They were dreaming of eating bread in the kingdom of God, but were choosing the world and rejecting the bread of heaven.

The conclusion of the parable represents the servants as going out into the streets and lanes of the city, they turn from the leaders and the most highly privileged to the common people; and, when there is still room, they go out of the city, away from the highly favoured nation, even to the gentiles, persuading and constraining them to come and partake of the feast, and these eat bread in the kingdom of God while those who were first bidden are excluded.

While this parable had its first application to those who sat at meat with the Master in the Pharisee's house, it applies to all who are ready to talk of the blessedness of eating bread in the kingdom of God, and, at the same time, neglect their opportunity.

Luke's account of our Lord's discourse in the Pharisee's house ends abruptly, and gives place to an account

of an address to a great multitude who were following him. To this multitude, Jesus said, "If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."

It seems probable that the multitude, knowing our Lord's warning to the Pharisees and other highly privileged classes, may have based their hope on the simple fact that they had not enjoyed the highest privileges and had not made the greatest professions. There is a warning for these as well as for the Pharisees, and Christ's words leave no room for self delusion. If any man would be a follower of Christ, everything else must be made secondary. To the labouring and heavy laden, Christ offered rest; but he did not lead men to believe that he would be satisfied with any half-hearted service. He demands a love surpassing our love for father, mother, wife, children, or nearest and dearest earthly friend. No one could become a true disciple who would be unwilling to make any sacrifice, even the sacrifice of his own life.

Had Jesus been a mere man, such a demand would have been most unreasonable; but, being the Son of God, and about to offer up his own life for his people, he had the highest claims on his followers. In this address to the enthusiastic but fickle multitude, the sword of the Spirit was applied to all who recklessly professed faith in him and obedience to him. He warned his followers to count the cost as carefully as the man who would build a tower, or the king that would go to war. He declared plainly that a man must renounce all that he had in order to be his disciple, and that disciples without this degree of

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consecration were salt without its savour, utterly worthless.

To his own disciples and to others, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus revealed the righteousness of his kingdom. Here he showed to the multitude a life that is exalted above the sensual and the present. These words were addressed to disciples in every age. To be a Christian is not merely to be a good citizen of this world, a good member of society; it is to have citizenship in heaven, to live above the world, having fellowship with God and with his Son Jesus Christ. This fellowship will purify and ennoble every earthly relation, but it will, at the same time, raise men above all earthly relations. These claims of Christ are warranted only by the fact that he was one with the Father, the very Son of God.

While Jesus was warning the promiscuous multitude against underestimating the conditions of discipleship, the scribes and Pharisees were murmuring that he was receiving sinners and eating with them. As we read the words of Jesus to the multitude we realize that he is claiming equality with the Father; as we read the complaints of the Pharisees, we see him identified with suffering humanity, an infinitely compassionate Saviour, who recognizes publicans and sinners as his brethren with whom he mingles as friend with friend. Looking at him from the two points we see both perfect divinity and perfect humanity, and are constrained to say, *Ecce Deus! Ecce Homo!*

In the answer to the complaint of the Pharisees and scribes, that Jesus received sinners and ate with them, there are the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son. A few weeks later, when the same complaint was made against him because he lodged with the publican, Zaccheus, Jesus answered, "The Son of man



came to seek and to save that which was lost;" and he may have said the same in connection with the use of the parable of the lost sheep on a different occasion. (Matthew 18: 11-14.)

The answer by parables reveals the attitude of Christ toward lost sinners, and gives so satisfactory a reason for his receiving sinners and mingling with them, that he does not need to say anything by way of application. If the owner of one hundred sheep would leave the ninety and nine and go out after one that was lost, and rejoice when he has found it, was it a strange thing that he, the good shepherd, the Son of the Heavenly Father, should seek lost men and bring them back to the fold of God? Why should he not eat with sinners if, by so doing, he could save them? The fact that they were lost sinners and needed his help was the appeal to the great compassion of the Father who so loved the world as to send his only begotten Son as the good Shepherd. To the critical Pharisee, Jesus could say, "what man of you would not seek a lost sheep?" and the lesson is, that God is more deeply interested in a lost man; for there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. This parable emphasizes the fact that Christ's great mission is to sinners, to the lost. The ninety and nine are left for a time that one may be found, and there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance.

Before the Christian church can give a secondary place to the work of seeking and saving those who are reckoned outcasts, this parable must be eliminated.

The parable of the lost coin illustrates especially the diligent search. As the woman values the coin, and searches diligently until she finds it, and then rejoices, so God in Christ searches for sinners with such care as war-

rants mingling with sinners in order to save them. With lighted lamp, in dark places, amidst the dust, sweeping the house, the woman seeks her lost coin; and, in like manner, the immaculate Son of God does not fail to come in contact with defilement and sin that he may find and save that more precious coin, a lost soul. In God's eyes the value of an immortal soul, created in God's image, is infinitely greater than that of the lost coin. Why, therefore, should the Pharisee criticise divine condescension in order to save a lost man?

In the parable of the lost son the interest centers in the great joy at his restoration or home-coming. There is the simple story of the younger son's desire to be far from the restraints and limitations of a good home; of the father's granting his request to have his share of the inheritance and liberty to use it as his own; of his departure to a distant country; of his dissipation, bad companions, absolute poverty, degradation and misery; of his coming to himself, thinking of his father's house; of his humble penitence, resolve to return, and his resolution carried out.

To those who were familiar with Jewish life this part of the parable would present a very realistic picture, but the intense pathos is fully developed when the loving father, seeing his son a great way off, is moved with compassion, runs to meet him, falls on his neck, kisses him, and the son says, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." The returning prodigal had intended to ask for the place of a hired servant, but the father's intense, impetuous and compassionate love prevents this request. He calls to the servants to bring the best robe and put it on him, to put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet,

to kill the fatted calf, eat and make merry, because the lost has been found and the dead is alive.

Is this a true picture of the emotions and actions of a loving earthy father for a penitent son who has wasted his inheritance and dishonoured his father's name? Is the love of the heavenly Father for his sinful but penitent children less than that of an earthly father? Did not the sacred scriptures of these scribes and Pharisees teach them that "Like as a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear him?" If there could be joy in heaven over the penitent sinner why should the Pharisees object to Christ's seeking these lost ones?

This would have been the inference from the parable if it had ended here. But it does not end here. There was an elder brother in the home who had no part in the rejoicing. He had not been longing for the rescue of his sinful brother, and when he learned from a servant the cause of such rejoicing, he was angry and, when his father entreated him, he objected, contrasting his own righteousness with his brother's sinfulness.

The parable needed no application. The father's attitude toward the penitent younger son was the attitude of Christ toward sinners, while the attitude of the elder brother was that of the scribes and Pharisees as they criticised Christ. It is not necessary to say that the parable does not approve the course of the younger son, nor suggest that the heavenly Father approves of the sins of his penitent children; but it does reveal the compassionate love of the heavenly Father for the penitent sinner who has dishonoured God and brought ruin on himself. With the greatest possible emphasis it teaches us that God is a loving, compassionate Father, that he delights in mercy.

This parable is for all time, and it puts the stamp of divine condemnation on the besetting sin of ecclesiasts. Cold, compassionless Christians may be correct in their lives, but they have not the spirit of Christ and are not true disciples. They may in a sense be the servants, but they are not the children of God. Jesus had taught his disciples to come to God in prayer, saying, "Our Father," and here in this parable he seeks to show scribes and Pharisees that God is the loving, heavenly Father and not a compassionless judge.

In the gospel by Luke the parable of the lost son is followed by the parable of the unjust steward, but there is an indication that some time may have elapsed; for, while the parable of the lost son was addressed to the Pharisees, the parable of the unjust steward was spoken to the disciples.

This parable has been the subject of more controversy than any other in the gospels. The steward is accused of wasting his master's goods, and, when called on for a reckoning, does not even claim that the accusation is false; but he does, on the other hand, before he is excluded from the stewardship, enter into a conspiracy with his master's creditors to defraud his master and give them the benefits of the fraud, so that they will befriend him when he is excluded from the stewardship. Our Lord does not commend this act of the steward, but, in the parable, he represents the master who has been defrauded as commending the wisdom or shrewdness of the steward. This would not of itself create any real difficulty; for, while no man likes to be robbed, it is not an uncommon thing for men who have been robbed to commend the skill and shrewdness of the robber. The real difficulty presents itself when we hear our Lord saying, "The sons of this world are for their own generation

wiser than the children of light. And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when it shall fail, they may receive you into everlasting tabernacles."

Without entering at length into the discussion of the questions that arise, we suggest a possible explanation. This parable was spoken to those who were recognized as disciples, in distinction from the scribes and Pharisees, and it was more or less closely connected with our Lord's answer to Pharisaic criticism of his mingling with sinners. The man in the parable, who is defrauded by his steward, being one of the children of this world, and, not looking at his steward's act from the standpoint of an enlightened conscience, was not so shocked by the dishonesty as to be unable to admire the shrewdness. Moreover, he may have profited in time past by the unscrupulous shrewdness of his steward.

Our Lord, on the other hand, saw all men as stewards of God, and not real owners of anything. He saw, too, that all were unfaithful, wasting their Lord's goods, and acting as though they were absolute owners instead of stewards. He does not commend their unfaithfulness, but he would have them prepare to render their account to their Lord, and make provision for the future as wisely as the children of this world do when they are considering their material interests. He would have them use the mammon of unrighteousness, not to provide luxuries for themselves in the present, but to bear the burdens, promote the welfare, and secure the friendship of their fellow men. If they did not use honestly in the service of their fellows the worldly wealth with which they had been entrusted, how could God entrust them with the true riches? It is possible, too, that he suggests here how worldly wealth, or the mammon of unrighteous-



ness, may, by deeds of charity, be transmuted into true riches.

Apart from the questions of Christian casuistry that may be raised, the whole parable emphasizes the fact that God is the real owner, and that men are only stewards; that they must not serve and trust mammon instead of serving and trusting God, and that they must not seek to divide their allegiance between God and mammon. In the light of this parable, all thought of worldly wealth that does not regard it as a divine trust, seems a service of mammon.

The parable of the unfaithful steward was addressed to the disciples, but it was heard by the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, and they scoffed at Jesus. To their scoffs he replied saying, "Ye are they that justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knoweth your hearts; for that which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God." The Pharisees were condemning publicans and sinners, but they were, at the same time, loving and serving the mammon of unrighteousness. They were zealous for and boasted of the law and condemned publicans and sinners, but they had no word of rebuke for Herod, the miserable adulterer and murderer of John the Baptist. They were zealous for law, but, for sin in high places, for gilded iniquity, they had no condemnation.

This rebuke of the Pharisees is followed and emphasized by the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. For suffering poverty, the Pharisees had no compassion; for gilded crime, they had no condemnation; and in this parable Jesus threw on the rich and the poor the light of the eternal years. He did not intimate that the rich were always vicious, and the poor always virtuous; for he introduced Abraham, a rich man, with Lazarus, a poor

man, borne by angels to Abraham's bosom. He only taught that God's estimate of men is not influenced by their poverty or by their wealth.

In the parable, the rich man is clothed in purple and fine linen and fares sumptuously every day, but he does not realize that wealth is a sacred trust to be used for the benefit of others, as well as for himself. No question is raised as to how he came to be the possessor of great wealth or how Lazarus came to be so poor. One is very rich and enjoys every luxury that wealth can furnish; the other is very poor and helpless, and they are brought in contact with each other; but the rich man does not move a finger, nor make the slightest effort to help the suffering fellow man that shares with his dogs the crumbs that fall from his table. Neither the rich man's wealth nor the poor man's poverty can prevent their dying. The rich man is buried. What becomes of the dishonoured body of the poor man we are not told, but we are told that he, the real man, is carried by angels to Abraham's bosom, and that the rich man is in Hades, and that he is in torment. Their conditions are reversed. The rich man does not appeal to Lazarus; he has not yet lost his earthly delusion, that the poor man could not be anything but the servant of the rich, and he, therefore, appeals to Abraham to send Lazarus to minister to him and relieve his torments. But Abraham answered, first, "Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things, but now here he is comforted and thou are tormented." But he answers also, "Besides all this between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they which would pass from here to you may not be able, and that none may pass over from thence to us."

When Lazarus lay at the rich man's gate there was an impassable gulf between them, but that gulf was created by the rich man's selfishness and pride. But for his selfishness and pride, he could have made to himself friends by using his wealth in the service of God and in doing good to men; but now the gulf is fixed by divine justice, and it is too late to secure the aid of Lazarus. No word of man can add to the vividness of this picture or make its lessons plainer or more impressive.

The remainder of the parable is hardly less impressive, but it presents more difficult problems. In his treatment of Lazarus the rich man had seemed utterly regardless of the sufferings of others; but, now, in his misery, he thinks of his five brethren who were living as he had lived, and he beseeches Abraham to send Lazarus to warn them so as to prevent them from coming to that place of torment. To this Abraham replies, "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them." The rich man is not silenced by this answer to his petition, but when he offers the plea that if one went to his brethren from the dead they would believe, Abraham answered, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rise from the dead."

Are we to infer from this part of the parable that they who have gone beyond the "fixed gulf" still retain an interest in and affection for their friends that would make them forgetful of their own sufferings and solicitous for the welfare of others? Do we find here a ray of hope that the "fixed gulf" may some time be crossed? These questions we cannot answer. We may, however, find in this part of the parable a great practical truth that should not be overlooked. It is this: Men need no better revelation than God has given in the Bible. It is a delusion to think that if our friends and dear ones could come

back from Hades and tell what they had seen, faith would be easy. The scribes and Pharisees were not convinced by the resurrection of Lazarus; nor were they persuaded by the resurrection of their crucified Lord. If men believe not Moses and the prophets, if men believe not the gospel, they need not expect their acquaintances to come back to them from the dead.

This whole parable throws the bright light of the eternal years on all the questions of Christian philanthropy. A well known rich man boasted of the wisdom of his philanthropic schemes, because he did not try to help the "submerged tenth" of the human race. Well, Lazarus belonged to the "submerged tenth" that Pharisees, ancient and modern, despise; but Christ came to save the lost, and our heavenly Father sent his angels to carry the despised Lazarus to Abraham's bosom, while the rich man cried in vain from beyond the "fixed gulf."

Having emphasized his answer to the scoffs of the Pharisees by the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Jesus turned to his disciples, with a most impressive warning, as he said, "It is impossible but that occasions of stumbling should come; but woe unto him through whom they come. It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, rather than that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble. Take heed to yourselves; if thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he sin against thee seven times in the day, and seven times turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him."

Under the term *little ones* our Lord probably included little children, and all the humble and more dependent or less intelligent who were easily deceived and discouraged. The little ones to whom the scribes and Pharisees

were becoming stumbling blocks were the publicans and sinners. The warning is especially against that self-righteous, censorious, unforgiving spirit that rejoices in condemning others, and hence the exhortation to forgive the sins or wrongs of others when they *repent*, even though they repeat the sin seven times in the day. The exhortation is not addressed to the Pharisees, but it grew out of the thought of their cold, compassionless, censorious spirit as it was manifested toward publicans and sinners.

When the apostles heard the exhortation they seemed overwhelmed with the sense of their own responsibility, and they united in the petition to the Lord to increase their faith. They seemed to feel as Paul did when he exclaimed, "Who is sufficient for these things?" How could they be so wise, so forgiving, so like their Master that they would never cause others to stumble? They felt too their own weakness and insufficiency and hence their spontaneous, united prayer, "Increase our faith."

To this prayer Jesus gave his strong approval, as he said, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye would say unto this sycamore tree, be thou rooted up, and be thou planted in the sea, and it would have obeyed you." He would deepen the conviction that faith was the instrument of their power, that by faith they were linked with the omnipotent One, and that nothing would be too hard for them. Nevertheless, he warned them that the possibility of their being clothed with divine power should make them humble, since they were but servants who, when they had done all these things that were commanded them, were only meeting their just obligations. To his own disciples and apostles, as well as to the Pharisees, by percept and by example, Jesus Christ commended the virtue of humility. Pride, unbelief and



discontent disturbed the peace of heaven and drove out Satan; pride, unbelief and discontent destroyed the happiness of Eden and drove man out of the earthly Paradise; humble, trustful, obedient faith is the one condition of man's salvation and eternal well being and usefulness in God's service. Without true faith in God, man is hopeless and helpless, but with faith all things are possible to him.

Before leaving this general sketch of our Lord's teachings and movements it might not be amiss to say that the parables of the grain of mustard seed (Matthew 13:31-32. Mark 4:30-32); the parable of the leaven, (Matthew 13:33); the parable of the great supper (Matthew 22:1-14); the discussions concerning faith and merit (Matthew 17:20); offenses (Matthew 18:6-15); following Christ (Matthew 10:37-38); and the apostrophe to Jerusalem (Matthew 23:37-39) are very nearly identical with the parables and discourses recorded by Luke; but it seems less difficult, in view of all the known facts, to regard these discourses and parables as repeated on different occasions than to attempt to identify them.

## LI

### THE RAISING OF LAZARUS AND DEPARTURE TO EPHRAIM

John 11:25. "Jesus said unto her, I am the Resurrection and the Life."

(John 11:1-54.)

**I**N the gospel by John the account of our Lord's discourses at the feast of dedication is followed by the statement that Jesus went away again beyond Jordan where John was at first baptizing and that many believed on him there. John then tells of the raising of Lazarus, the deliberations of the sanhedrin, the departure to the wilderness city of Ephraim and the return to Bethany six days before the passover.

It was at least four months from the feast of the dedication to the feast of the passover, and this brief statement covers this entire period. Our only record of what Jesus did during this time is found, Luke 17:11-19:28, Mat. 19:1-20:3 and Mark 10:1-52. Whether these events occurred before or after the raising of Lazarus is not known, but there seems to be sufficient reason for placing them after that event. We therefore take up the raising of Lazarus at this point.

When Jesus was in Perea he was told by the Jews that Herod Antipas would kill him if he did not go away. Both Jesus and his disciples knew very well that he was safer in Herod's jurisdiction than he would be in Jerusalem, for, when he left the city of Jerusalem after the

feast of tabernacles and after the feast of the dedication, the Jews took up stones to stone him. Moreover he had already said that it was not possible for a prophet to perish outside of Jerusalem. Nevertheless, when death invaded the home of his dear friends in Bethany he disregarded the danger and came to their relief.

This miracle is only second in importance to the miracle of Christ's own resurrection. Jesus had raised from the dead the son of the widow of Nain and the daughter of Jairus, but very little is known of either of these either before or afterwards, and the accounts of their being brought to life are very brief. On the other hand, Lazarus was well known and the account of his being raised from the dead is given in detail. It was, not only a very great miracle, but a luminous acted parable and the words spoken by Jesus at this time have reechoed down through all the ages since.

It seems very remarkable that so great an event should not be noticed by Matthew, Mark and Luke, and, while many explanations have been given, the most reasonable seems to be that the synoptic writers confined themselves nearly entirely to the Galilean and Perea ministries. It might be said also in passing that its omission by the synoptic writers is a convincing refutation of the claim that John wrote merely to corroborate the other writers.

John's account of this miracle is adapted to interest and surprise the reader. Jesus was in Perea, and, when Lazarus became very dangerously ill, the sisters did not ask Jesus to come to them at the risk of his own life, but they did send a message saying, "he whom thou lovest is sick." When Jesus received the message he said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby." Though he loved, not only Lazarus, but the two anxious sisters, he

made no move toward helping them. He knew very well that Lazarus was passing through the dark valley of the shadow of death, and that the hearts of the two sisters were breaking, yet he remained where he was two whole days. At the end of the second day he said to his disciples, "Let us go into Judea again." The disciples protested strongly, saying, "Rabbi, the Jews were but now seeking to stone thee and goest thou thither again?" Jesus answered their objection by saying that there were twelve hours in the day. He probably meant that this was his day for work and therefore the question of personal danger must not interfere with his work. Then he said, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go that I may awake him out of his sleep." The disciples thought that Jesus spoke of taking rest in sleep, and that it was an indication that Lazarus would recover, but Jesus, had no such meaning, and said to them plainly "Lazarus is dead."

It might have been expected that Jesus would express regret that he could not be with the afflicted sisters in their great sorrow, but, instead of doing so, he said, "I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the end that you might believe; nevertheless, let us go to him." At this point, Thomas, despondent and hopeless as usual, said, "Let us go also that we may die with him." He regarded our Lord's going so near to Jerusalem as unwise and suicidal, but he would not forsake him.

When Jesus came to Bethany he found that Lazarus had been dead four days and that many Jews from Jerusalem were seeking to comfort the sorrowing sisters. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming she went out to meet him, but Mary remained in the house. When Martha met Jesus outside the village she said sadly and possibly reproachfully, "Lord, if thou hadst been here

my brother had not died." It was but the expression of the sad thought that so often unbidden comes to the mind of bereaved friends, the thought that it might have been otherwise. Martha's sad cry had in it an element of hope, for she added, "Even now I know that whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, God will give it thee." She had the mistaken idea that the death of her brother was the result of her Lord's absence, but she thought that it might not still be too late. She had been saying, as the life of her brother was ebbing away, that while there was life there was hope. When she saw Jesus, she seemed to feel that hope might continue even when life was extinct. To this cry Jesus replied, "Thy brother shall rise again." Martha answered, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." She had a confused hope of a final resurrection, but she needed comfort in her present loneliness. Her hope of the resurrection was not so clear and definite as to be the real substance of the thing hoped for, the evidence of things not seen; and Jesus met her felt need in the words that have reechoed through all succeeding ages, when he said, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die." How far Martha was able to understand the tremendous import and the definite meaning of these wonderful words, we do not know, but they deeply impressed her, and they helped her, for, after saying, "I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, that cometh into the world," she went and called her sister Mary secretly, saying, "The Master has come and calleth for thee."

Jesus had not yet come into the village, and he remained where he was after Martha left him to go to her sister. As soon as Mary heard the message she came



quickly, giving no explanation to her companions as to where she was going. When she saw Jesus she fell at his feet, exclaiming, "Lord if thou hadst been here my brother had not died." When Jesus saw her weeping and saw the weeping friends that followed her, he was greatly moved, and said, "Where have ye laid him?" The sisters said, "Lord come and see." As Jesus went to the tomb he wept, and the Jews seeing this evidence of love said, "Could not this man who opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that this man also should not die?" These Jews had probably witnessed the healing of the blind man, and were therefore, more impressed by it than by the reports of his raising the daughter of Jairus in far off Capernaum, or his raising the son of the widow in the distant village of Nain. They could join with the sorrowing sisters in thinking of what Jesus could have done if he had been there before Lazarus died, but, now, it seemed too late, and, as they came to the tomb, they had no hope. Martha thought it was too late to even look on the face of the dead and objected when Jesus bade them remove the stone that closed the cave where the body had been buried, saying, "He hath been dead four days."

There seemed to be in every mind, except that of the Master, a sense of utter helplessness. They were in the presence of death, the universal conqueror of humanity, and they had no hope that his work could be undone. Jesus mingled his tears with theirs as though he, too, were hopeless. But it was not so. His tears were not a confession of helplessness, for he replied to Martha's objection, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou believedst, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" His words seemed to kindle hope, and they removed the stone. What followed can only find adequate description in the words of the evangelist, as he says, "Jesus lifted up his eyes,

and said, Father, I thank thee that thou heardest me. And I know that thou hear'st me always; but because of the multitude which standeth around I said it, that they may believe that thou didst send me. And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. He that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him and let him go."

Many of the Jews who saw this miracle believed on Jesus. It seemed to them a most conclusive proof of his divine power. The opening of the eyes of one who had been born blind was a convincing proof that Jesus was indeed the Christ; but this miracle seemed the crowning evidence of the truth of all his claims. It was witnessed by a large company. Lazarus had been dead four days. Jesus did not touch even the stone that enclosed the sepulchre, but he did in the audience of all, commune with God the Father, and then, with a loud voice, he did speak the words of omnipotence and the dead man heard his voice and obeyed. If any miracle of power would warrant faith in the miracle-worker, surely this miracle was sufficient, and unbelief was irrational.

For all who saw it, the raising of Lazarus was a convincing and overwhelming proof that Jesus was what he claimed to be, the Christ. Nevertheless, for disciples in other ages, this miracle is a great luminous, acted parable and designed and adapted to throw light on many difficult problems. As we see the Son of God staying two days in Perea while his beloved friends are in agony in Bethany; as we hear him say, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God;" as we hear him say again, "I am glad I was not there," we may learn how God looks upon the sufferings of his people, and why he permits them to

suffer. Jesus permitted his friends to suffer for the good of others, in order that other men and women in all coming ages might have an object lesson, and might hear the wondrous words, "I am the resurrection and the life." The great mystery of suffering was not solved by this resurrection to mortal life, but by the resurrection of Christ to immortal life; and the solution of the problem can only be understood in the great hereafter; nevertheless this miracle enables all the children of God, even while they are in this world, to see why God permits those whom he loves with an infinite love, to suffer the deepest distresses while he seems to hide his face from them. The Son of God loved the family at Bethany and mingled his tears with theirs, yet he did not come at once to their relief. He is the same yesterday, to-day and forever.

This great miracle, so near to Jerusalem, witnessed by so many people, perplexed and alarmed the chief priests and Pharisees, and they called a meeting of the sanhedrin to decide what should be done. They admitted that Jesus had done many signs and they feared an uprising of the people to proclaim him King. When the Jewish council was in doubt, Caiaphas, the high priest, with a haughty air of superior wisdom, came forward with the politic but diabolical advice to murder Jesus, saying, "It is expedient for us that one man die for the people and that the whole nation perish not."

The evangelist says that being high priest Caiaphas prophesied that Jesus should die, not only for that nation, but for all the children of God scattered abroad amongst all nations. This, no doubt, means that Caiaphas unconsciously used words that were a prophecy of the real vicarious death of Jesus.

Vicarious sacrifice may be viewed from two points that are as far apart as heaven and hell. The vicarious sacrifice of Jesus Christ when he died for his people, as God reveals it, was his loving self sacrifice as he chose to be wounded for the transgressions of his people. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son. Jesus' vicarious atonement was prompted by his own love that constrained him to lay down his life for his people. It was the unique offering of divine compassion for lost humanity.

Caiaphas' idea of vicarious sacrifice was absolutely different. It was the offspring of diabolical selfishness that would murder the innocent on the selfish plea of self preservation and political expediency. Alas that he should have so many followers! Whether he know it or not, every man who would ignore justice and sacrifice the rights of the innocent, in things great or small, on the plea of expediency, is a disciple of Caiaphas.

## LII

### FROM THE RAISING OF LAZARUS UNTIL THE COMING TO JERICHO

John 11: 54. "Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews, but departed thence into the country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim; and there he tarried with the disciples."

(Matthew 19: 1-20: 28; Mark 10: 1-45; Luke 17: 11-18: 34.)

HAVING given an account of the raising of Lazarus and the meeting of the sanhedrin, John goes on to say, "Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews, but departed thence into the country near to the wilderness into a city called Ephraim, and there he tarried with the disciples." Then, in direct connection, he says, "Now, the feast of the passover was at hand and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the passover, to purify themselves. They sought therefore for Jesus, and spake one with another, as they stood in the temple, What think ye? That he will come to the feast?" If this were our only source of information we might assume that Ephraim was near to Jerusalem, but other evangelists say that Jesus returned to Bethany by way of Jericho, and probably by the borders of Galilee and Samaria (Luke 17: 11). It is evident, therefore, that this unknown Ephraim was probably somewhere in Perea.

How long our Lord tarried with his disciples in this unknown city, and what he did there is not known, but it



seems probable that the time was measured by days or weeks, rather than by months, and that it was devoted to preparation for the last great tragedy that was to be enacted at Jerusalem. It is probable also that the events recorded, Luke 17: 11-18-34, took place after our Lord left this quiet retreat as he journeyed on his way to Jerusalem.

On the way from Ephraim to the passover Jesus entered into a certain village where he was met by ten lepers, who stood afar off, and cried, "Master, have mercy upon us;" Jesus answered their appeal by saying, "Go show yourselves to the priests." The lepers all obeyed, and, as they went to find the priests, they were all cleansed. One of them, when he realized that he was cleansed, turned back and with a loud voice glorified God, and falling at Jesus' feet, thanked him. This one was a Samaritan, and Jesus said, "Were not the ten cleansed? but where are the nine? Were there none found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger? And he said unto him, arise, and go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole."

Nine of these lepers were Jews and one was a Samaritan, but a great common misery had broken down the barriers of national prejudice, and had brought them together. When they were healed, they parted company, the nine going on to observe the outward forms of their religion, while the other gave expression to his deep sense of gratitude to God before he could observe the forms that were necessary to remove his ceremonial uncleanness. Did he disobey the Master by returning to him to express his gratitude before going to the priest? Jesus did not so regard his act. The Samaritan's action was better than a mere literal or formal obedience. Jesus approved the glad and grateful thanksgiving, and con-

trasted it with the lack of gratitude that was satisfied with observing the letter of the law.

The whole event, as described by Luke, may only have occupied a few minutes. The ten lepers, having heard Christ's command, turned at once to obey, and then discovered that they were healed. The nine had no interest in their benefactor. They did not wish to have it known that they had ever been miserable lepers. They hastened to cut loose from everything and from every one that reminded them of the past. They thought of themselves and looked out for themselves. The Samaritan was different. He thought of his benefactor and did not wish to forget the past, but he did wish to show his gratitude to his benefactor, and, as he sought to do this, the cleansing of his leprosy became the means to the higher and greater good, his personal salvation.

If a question arises as to why this miracle is not mentioned by Matthew or Mark, a satisfactory answer is suggested when we remember that no one of the evangelists professed to record all our Lord's miracles, and Matthew and Mark had recorded the healing of lepers during the Galilean ministry, so that they could have no special reason for speaking of this particular event. The facts that, amongst the ten lepers, there was one Samaritan and that his action, when healed, differed from the acts of the others, are sufficient reason for Luke's making special mention of this miracle.

The healing of the ten lepers was probably our Lord's first miracle after leaving Ephraim where he had enjoyed a season of quiet rest and communion with his disciples, but from this time onward he was in almost daily contact with the Pharisees. Luke tells of a discourse concerning the coming of the kingdom of God that was introduced by a question of the Pharisees. They asked Jesus when

the kingdom of God would come. In his answer he corrected their views in regard to the character of that kingdom. They were expecting some such outward manifestations as would fulfill the prophecies concerning the glory and dominion of David's greater Son, but Jesus said, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, Lo, here! or lo, there! for the kingdom of God is within you or in the midst of you."

This answer to the Pharisees may have meant either or both of two things. It may have meant that the kingdom of God, in its essence, is a silent principle of righteousness, peace, and joy in God that has its dwelling place in the heart, and can exist where there are no outward forms. Or, it may have meant that the kingdom the Pharisees should have been looking for was already there in the person of the King, and in the faithful hearts that believed on him. It was equivalent to saying, You are asking for the kingdom of God, while you are overlooking it; it is here in your midst, and you do not recognize it because it does not come with observation.

This answer was not understood nor accepted by the Pharisees, nor was it fully understood by Jesus' disciples, and he gave them a more extended discourse on the same subject. He told them that the days would come when they should desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man and should not see it. They did not recognize their privilege when they were in daily contact with their divine Master; and, when he should be taken from them, they would begin to realize the blessings they had failed to appreciate. He warned them, also, against the danger of mistaking something else for the kingdom of God. This warning was for all generations in every age. Credulity and skepticism go hand in hand. The kingdom

of God is overlooked and rejected, while sensational pretenders, who say, "lo, here! or lo, there!" are believed.

Having said this much to correct errors as to the character of the kingdom, Jesus went on to say that the coming of the kingdom could not be anticipated in regard to time. It would come as the lightning when it lighteneth out of the one part under heaven and shineth to another. It would not come until the Son of man had suffered many things and been rejected. Jesus taught that his final coming would find the world as unprepared as it was in the days of Noah when the flood came, or as it was in the days of Lot when Sodom was destroyed.

After this Jesus repeated his warning to his disciples that self-seeking was suicide, that real self-saving was only possible by willing self-sacrifice; that men are not saved in the mass, nor by organization; that, of two men in one bed, one should be taken and the other left, and, of two women engaged in the same simple domestic duties, one should be taken and the other left. The bewildered disciples said, "where, Lord?" He replied "where the body is, there will the eagles, or vultures, be gathered together."

The meaning of these last words and their bearing on what precedes, is doubtful. We may venture to suggest that they had some reference to the Pharisees and the hypocritical rulers of the Jews who were making so much of dead forms, while they were ignoring and rejecting living truth. The vultures, assembled to feed on and to fight over the decaying carcass, were not unlike the hypocritical religious teachers who fought over the outward forms of a dead faith.

Not long after this, seated on the Mount of Olives, our Lord spake more at length on this general subject; and it can be treated more fully as we study that event.

After reporting our Lord's discourse concerning the coming of the kingdom of God, the evangelist Luke records two parables concerning prayer that are not recorded by any of the other evangelists. One of these is called the parable of the Unjust Judge, and it is designed and adapted to enforce the duty of perseverance or importunity in prayer. This judge neither feared God nor regarded man. He had neither religious reverence that would constrain him to look upon the just cause as a sacred trust that had been committed to him as God's minister for justice, nor did he have that touch of humanity that would constrain him to be interested in and have compassion on a suffering brother man. He was absolutely selfish, and could only be appealed to successfully through his selfishness. Nevertheless, a poor widow so besieged him with petitions for deliverance that he said, "Though I fear not God, neither regard man, yet, because this woman troubleth me, I will avenge her lest she wear me out by her continual coming."

From this example of the power of persevering, importunate prayer, where the judge has no sense of justice or kindness, our Lord drew his lesson, as he said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge saith. And shall not God avenge his elect, who cry to him day and night, and he is long suffering over them? I say unto you that he will avenge them speedily." God is a loving Father, and not an unjust judge; but loving fathers do not always answer at once the petitions of their children, and God may, for good reasons, let his children pray and pray again.

This parable closes with what at first seems an irrelevant question, as Jesus says, "Howbeit, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" The connection with the parable may be this. The fact that all the prayers of God's people are not answered immediately,



and in the way desired, may lead to the conclusion that God does not answer prayer, and hence the question, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" He will come when the men of the world are selling and buying, eating and drinking, and doing everything but looking for his appearing. Will his own people still be hoping and praying and watching? shall he find faith on the earth?

The parable of the Pharisee and the Publican follows the parable of the Unjust Judge, and it is designed and adapted to teach the importance of humility in prayer. The encouragement to be importunate in prayer may be misunderstood. Importunacy is not impudence, nor presumption. Men are not to come to God with demands or claims, but with petitions; men are not to come with trust in themselves, but with trust in God. In this parable two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a Publican. The Pharisee felt that he had superior claims, and that he could make his demands on the ground of his own merits. He said in his heart, "God, I thank thee that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." The Publican's attitude presents a striking contrast. He would not so much as lift his eyes toward heaven, but, smiting his breast, said, "God be merciful to me a sinner." He had no claims to present, no merit to plead. Was he a better man than the Pharisee, who fasted twice a week, was not an extortioner, unjust or an adulterer, and who looked with an air of self-righteous superiority on the publican? Our Lord answered this question as he said, "This man went down to his house justified rather than the other." When men come before God self-righteous pride is the greatest abomina-

tion, and real humility is the cardinal virtue. In God's sight the humble, erring publican, confessing his sin and pleading for mercy, is a better man than the proud Pharisee boasting of his scrupulous regard for the letter of the law.

In the order of time, it is probable that our Lord's next discourse was the discourse concerning marriage and divorce and was not recorded by Luke. It hardly seems possible to identify Luke 16: 18 with Matthew 19: 3-12, and Mark 10: 2-12, but the fact that Luke had recorded that brief statement of Jesus made in different circumstances might be sufficient reason for making no record of this longer discourse on the same subject.

This discourse of Jesus was the result of a question asked by Pharisees tempting him. John the Baptist had been put to death because he condemned Herod Antipas' action in taking his brother Philip's wife, and these Pharisees may have aimed to bring Christ into conflict with Herod Antipas by his answer to their question. If, however, we take the question as it is recorded by Matthew, it seems more like an effort to bring Christ into conflict with one or other of the rabbinic schools. These schools differed in their judgment as to what constituted sufficient reasons for divorce, and the question whether it was lawful for a man to put away his wife "for every cause" called for what Christ regarded as a sufficient cause for a divorce.

While the schools of Shammai and Hillel differed widely in their estimates of justifiable reasons for seeking a divorce, the Jewish law and Jewish practice made it possible for a man to divorce his wife for no better reason than that he found some other woman more attractive. Our Lord repudiated both schools, and laid down the great principle on which marriage of one man

with one woman is based, as he said, "Have ye not read, that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and the twain shall become one flesh? So that they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." By this answer our Lord lifted this divine institution out of the mire of sensuality and selfishness, and showed the divine ideal when God created man in his own image and then created woman as his companion and other self.

This definite and comprehensive answer swept away all the sophistries that lust, selfishness and sensuality had invented to degrade woman, and to corrupt this purest, sweetest and holiest of human relationships. It did not satisfy the Pharisees, and they replied, "Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorcement and to put her away?" Our Lord answered this appeal to the law of Moses by saying, "Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it hath not been so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery." Here was an unequivocal answer to the Pharisees' question and their appeal to the law of Moses. Moses had not commanded, but, because of the hardness of their hearts, for the protection of the woman, he had permitted a man in certain circumstances to give a bill of divorcement. It was, however, contrary to the divine plan and ideal manifested in the creation of man and woman and in the first institution of the marriage relation. Jesus did not condemn the law of Moses, but he did, and with strong emphasis, put the stamp of his con-

demnation on the seeking or granting of divorce for any other reason than that of fornication. His teachings on this subject were so definite, so different from the Jewish sentiment in his day, and so intense, that even his disciples questioned whether it were not better to avoid the sacred and irrevocable responsibilities of the marriage relation, for they said, "if the case of the man is so with his wife it is not expedient to marry." Our Lord answered their objection, showing that, apart from physical unfitness for marriage, there may be in some men such preoccupation with the things that pertain to the kingdom of God as will remove all thoughts and desires for the marriage relation. He did not, however, even suggest any law of celibacy for any class of men.

In immediate connection with the report of this discourse on the sacredness of the marriage relation, we have an account of Christ's blessing the little children. Following the order of events as it is indicated by the evangelist Mark, Jesus left the Pharisees, and entered "the house" with his disciples where he gave them a fuller explanation of his teaching. He was probably in this house when the little children were brought to him that he might bless them.

This incident is recorded by the three evangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke. It seems a most appropriate sequel to what he has said about the sacredness and inviolability of the marriage relation. In that dissolute age when, as Seneca says, Roman women no longer reckoned their years by the consuls, but by the number of husbands they had repudiated; in that Roman province where Herod Antipas, the murderer of John the Baptist, the double adulterer, was unrebuked by religious teachers, Jesus had proclaimed the divine ideal of marriage, and now in the house where parents presented their



little children, the fruit of pure wedlock, he took them in his arms and blessed them. His disciples had been surprised and troubled by their Master's teachings, and even suggested that it would be better not to marry. Our Lord's answer to their suggestion, and the fact that he had begun his ministry by attending a marriage feast, repudiated their error, but they needed something more. They had a low estimate of woman, and did not set a true value on childhood. They thought that a discourse concerning the interests of the kingdom of God should not be disturbed by parents bringing their little children to the Master and they rebuked the parents. When Jesus saw it, he was "moved with indignation." This is the strongest word that is ever used to express his disapproval of the action of his disciples. He was moved with indignation, and said unto them, "Suffer the little children to come unto me; forbid them not; for of such is the Kingdom of God. Verily, I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein. And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands upon them."

This remarkable and beautiful object lesson does not of itself warrant the doctrine that all children dying in infancy are saved, for these children were evidently presented by believers. Nor does it, of itself, afford an adequate authority for the baptism of infants; but it certainly does warrant believing parents in regarding their children as sharing their covenant relation with God; and it certainly does authorize them to bring their children to the visible church, to claim for them some outward form of recognition; and, when this incident is interpreted in the light of other teachings of the sacred scriptures on this subject, there is no room for doubt. Christian parents, as they bring their children to Christ



in baptism, may appropriate, as well as hear the echo of Christ's words, saying, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God."

In immediate connection with their accounts of Christ's blessing the little children, the first three evangelists tell of the coming of a rich young ruler, who inquired what he must do in order to have eternal life. The different narratives of this event do not differ in any essential. From Luke only we learn that the young man was a ruler, while Mark, as usual, gives the more detailed account of the incident, as he tells of the young man's running and kneeling to Jesus. Jesus had left the house and was resuming his journey toward Jerusalem, when this earnest, honest, thoughtful young man presented himself as a humble inquirer after the way of life. His wealth, his position as a ruler, were forgotten for the time, and he knelt to Jesus, saying, "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Could there be any objection to this manner of approaching Christ? Jesus objected, saying, "Why callest thou me good? None is good save one, even God." The young man was courteous. He would honour Jesus as a great and wise teacher, but he failed to see in him more than a great and good teacher, and this failure is reproved by the Master's answer. It would be utterly inconsistent with all our Lord's teachings concerning himself to suppose that he refused to accept the attribute of goodness, but it is in exact accord with his teaching elsewhere to infer that he claimed divine goodness. Then, in order to bring out the young man's estimate of himself, Jesus said, "Thou knowest the commandments. Do not kill, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not defraud, honour thy father and

thy mother." The young man answered promptly, and with conscious honesty, "All these things have I observed from my youth." He was in these respects a model young man, and Jesus loved him; nevertheless, he did not say to him that he needed nothing more, or that he had eternal life; but he did say, "One thing thou lackest." Then he applied the real test, as he said, "Go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me." This command revealed what was lacking. This young man loved and trusted his worldly wealth more than he loved and trusted God or the heavenly treasures. His god was his worldly wealth; his heart was not filled and thrilled by the power of an endless life. "His countenance fell at the saying, and he went away sorrowful, for he was one that had great possessions."

As the young man departed, Jesus looked round about and said to his disciples, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" Then, seeing the amazement of his disciples, he said, "Children, how hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." When the disciples said in their astonishment, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus answered, "with men it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God." As Peter heard these words, he said to the Master, "Lo, we have left all and followed thee; what then shall we have?" Jesus did not rebuke this thought about reward; but he did declare that every one who had left home, or brethren, or sisters or mother, or father or children or lands for his sake, and the gospel's, should receive a hundred fold, now in this time, and, in the age to come, eternal life. He recog-

nized a divine selfishness that seeks eternal well being, a selfishness that seeks eternal life, a selfishness that sacrifices temporal good and, by so doing, transmutes worldly wealth into heavenly treasures.

We have at this point a good illustration of the essential harmony and the complete independence of the gospel narratives. Luke records only the Master's promise to those who have made any sacrifice for him; Mark adds a warning against cherishing the thought of superiority, and he records the words, "but many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first"; and Matthew tells us that this warning was emphasized and illustrated by a parable. In the parable the kingdom of heaven is likened to a householder who employed labourers in his vineyard. Some of these labourers were hired early in the morning, some at the sixth, some at the ninth and some at the eleventh hour, but each one was paid, according to agreement, a penny. Then those who had laboured the entire day murmured, not because they had received less than the agreement called for, but because others who had laboured less time received as much as they. But the householder defended his course by saying, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? or is thine eye evil because I am good?"

The general lesson of the parable is the enforcement of the Master's words, as he said, "The last shall be first and the first last." It is designed to teach that all God's covenant promises are fulfilled, but that all is of grace and not of debt, that those who have laboured longest have no more claim upon God than those who were called last. It was an answer to Peter's question, and could be applied to the apostles. Paul came later, but was given a very high place. It could be applied to the Jews as compared with other nations. The gift of God

to all his own people, whether their service be long or short, in a high or in a low place—the gift of God to each one is eternal life through Jesus Christ.

This does not teach an absolute equality of all who are saved; it can be interpreted in such way as to not come in conflict with the definite statement of other Scriptures; but it does teach that all is of grace and of covenant promise, and that the rewards are not graded by the time of the call to, nor by length of service. No other parable would be so likely to suggest that eternal life can be secured by works as this one, if it were not guarded. Consider its connection and look at the first outline. There is, first, the assurance that no one gives up anything for Christ and the gospel without being rewarded a hundred fold; and, then, there is the hiring of men for wages agreed upon. If the parable had ended here, it would have seemed like a matter of earning and wages only. But this error is guarded against, when we find all receiving the same wages without regard to real earnings, and when the householder says, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?"

Our Lord, **having** answered Peter's question as to the reward the apostles should receive for having left all to follow him, told them what his own future was to be. He had very patiently answered what must have seemed a selfish question. These disciples were enjoying the greatest privilege that ever came to mortal man, yet they were asking what reward they should have for the great sacrifice they had made. It was enough to tax infinite patience. Christ had left the Father's bosom and the Father's house to come and associate with them, and they were asking what reward they should have for leaving their little earthly interests to follow him. But Jesus seemed to be looking forward rather than backward; and, as he

answered their questions concerning rewards, he thought of what would befall him within a few days, when he came to Jerusalem. There must have been something very remarkable and intense in his manner, for all the circumstances are related. They were in the way, going up to Jerusalem—Jesus was going before them; they were amazed, and they that followed were afraid. Jesus took the twelve and told them of the sufferings that awaited him at Jerusalem; he told them of his condemnation by Jews and gentiles, of his death and resurrection. They did not, however, comprehend the full meaning of his words until afterwards.

This event is described by the first three evangelists and in nearly the same words, though Mark gives the most vivid picture, and Luke alone tells us that the disciples "did not perceive the things that were said." The Master's language had been plain enough, but it was in such conflict with the disciples' ideas of the coming kingdom that they refused or failed to understand it literally. They knew that their Master was in danger at Jerusalem, and they did not wish to have him go there; but they did not grasp the full meaning of his promised resurrection, and they failed to perceive that he was about to be actually put to death.

The next event, recorded only by Matthew and Luke, presents some difficulties. Taking the two accounts and combining them, we see James and John with their mother coming to Jesus after he had foretold his own sufferings and death, and the mother asks that her two sons may have the places of highest honour in Christ's kingdom. It seems a strange and most untimely request. The Master had been speaking of his own sufferings and death, and this mother and her two sons are seeking the high places. Nevertheless, the mother comes with humble



adoration; she comes with a faith that is not eclipsed by the Master's prediction of the shame, sufferings and death that awaited him at Jerusalem; and, when Jesus asks whether the two disciples are able to share his cup and his baptism, they reply promptly, "We are able." There was in their request a certain kind and degree of faith that elevated it above ordinary vanity and self-seeking. They wished to be near the Master. They felt willing and able to endure the shame with him, to suffer with him as well as to reign with him. In his answer, Jesus recognized this, as he said, "The cup that I drink, ye shall drink; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized, but to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it is for them for whom it hath been prepared"; or, probably a better rendering, "it is not mine to give except for whom it hath been prepared of my Father."

While Jesus saw as much of faith in this request as he saw of self-seeking, the other disciples seemed to see only selfish ambition. They judged the motives of these two disciples by their own motives, and they were filled with indignation. They had all been rebuked on another occasion for unseemly strife as to who should be the greatest, and now this strife was about to be renewed when Jesus corrected their false conception of greatness, by showing the contrast between his kingdom and the kingdoms of the gentiles. He declared that amongst his disciples greatness must be measured by service; that the best servant of all is the greatest of all, and he enforced this by his own example, as he said, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

In these words there is sufficient motive power to revolutionize the world. They give a new ideal to human

ambition, and the adoption of this ideal as the great aim of human effort would result in the sense of universal brotherhood. It is the germ of selfishness and the spirit of self seeking that arrays man against his brother man in all the bitter conflicts of life. Back of all the millions slain by their fellow men, from the time that Cain looked upon the dead body of his murdered brother until the present; back of all the cries and mortal agonies of all earth's battlefields in all the ages; back of all the broken hearts and desolated homes that have resulted from man's conflict with his fellowman, lies the deadly sin of selfishness. Jesus Christ establishes his kingdom in the world by substituting for the germ of selfishness, the germ of service, and for the spirit of self seeking, the spirit of self sacrifice for others.

John and James had ambition for great service as well as great honours, and James became the first apostolic martyr, while John lived and suffered for the Master till near the end of the first century, when he, too, probably drank the cup of martyrdom. Their request was probably prompted by motives that were not free from selfish ambition; but it afforded an opportunity for the Master to define true greatness.

### LIII

## JESUS AT JERICHO

Luke 19: 10. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

(Mat. 20: 29-34; Mark 10: 46-52; Luke 18: 35-19: 18.)

**T**HERE is room for differences of opinion as to the chronological order of events in all this section of our Lord's public ministry, and we do not attempt to defend our assumption that this was the last journey to Jerusalem. We may, however, say in passing that it seems impossible to accept the order suggested by many harmonists who make this visit to Jericho precede the feast of dedication and the raising of Lazarus; for to do so would leave us without any record of what Christ did for the four months immediately preceding the last passover. Notwithstanding the objections that may be offered, it seems much more consistent with all the known facts to regard all the events of this journey as taking place after the feast of dedication, and after the raising of Lazarus.

Jesus, with his disciples and the company of worshippers, on their way to the feast of the passover, crossed the Jordan for the last time and came to Jericho, the Eden of Palestine. This "City of Palms" was only about six hours from Jerusalem, and in our Lord's day was, not only one of the most beautiful, but one of the most important cities in Palestine. If an ordinary historian had been describing this event, he would have had a great deal

to say about the beauty and importance of this historic city, but the evangelists only tell what Jesus Christ did as he entered and passed through it. Matthew, Mark and Luke tell of a miracle of healing, and their accounts differ in such a way as to suggest that they might be describing different events. Matthew and Mark speak of our Lord's performing the miracle as they were going out of Jericho, and Luke speaks of it as occurring when they were coming into Jericho. Mark and Luke only speak of the healing of one blind man, and Matthew tells us that two blind men were healed. Different writers make different explanations, and it is certainly possible to so explain these different records as to satisfy any theory of inspiration and find no irreconcilable conflict in the narratives. If the different writers had been in collusion, no such question could have arisen, and our inability to say just how they are to be harmonized is conclusive evidence that the narratives are mutually independent.

The company with Jesus had become a great multitude, and their passing arrested the attention of blind beggars who sat by the wayside, and they inquired what it meant. When they were told that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, they began to cry out, "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me." The multitude sought to silence them, but they only cried the louder until Jesus stood still and called them to him, and said, "What will ye that I should do unto you?" When they made their plea that their eyes might be opened, Jesus was moved with compassion and healed them. Mark and Luke only speak of one, and Mark tells us that his name was Bartimeus.

It is evident that this miracle is not reported in order to show that Christ had power to perform such a miracle, for he had opened other blind eyes and had raised the dead. This miracle was not needed to add to his repu-

tation, for the persistent cry of these blind men when they heard that Jesus of Nazareth was passing shows that he was already known to them as one who could open the eyes of the blind. This miracle, like many others, is an acted parable, and if we would learn the lessons it is designed to teach, we must notice the incidents emphasized by the inspired evangelists. The time, the place and the number of persons healed seem unimportant; but the noise of the great multitude, the persistent cry of the blind men, the unwillingness of the multitude, the willingness and compassion of Jesus are emphasized. It was the noise of a great multitude of professors of religion going with Jesus to Jerusalem that attracted the attention of the blind men, and some of the multitude told the blind men what it all meant, as they said, "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by." But for the noise of the multitude and the explanation given by the multitude, these blind men would not have known that Jesus was near enough for them to call on him with any hope of being heard. But this same multitude rebuked the blind men and sought to silence their cries for help, while the blind men persisted and cried the louder. Then Jesus stood still, called the blind men, had compassion, commended their faith, and healed them.

Is not the lesson evident? In this age organized Christianity, or the Christian church, with her ordinances of religion, like the multitude at Jericho, is arresting the attention of a blind, sinning, suffering, lost world. The Christian church, in the proclamation of the Gospel, is telling blind, suffering, lost men that Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. Does the church stop here, or does she continue to imitate this multitude at Jericho by seeking to silence the cry of those who feel their need of Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour? Is the Christian church satisfied



when she has proclaimed Christ to the world, or is she seeking also to bring the world to Christ? Many critics of Christian churches complain that organized Christianity is putting obstacles in the way of those who would come to the Saviour. Is this criticism just? Are professing Christians so cold, compassionless, formal, conservative and proud as to silence the cry of any poor, spiritually blind, suffering Bartimeus? Or do we sing with equal emphasis,

"Christ for the world we sing;  
The world to Christ we bring"?

Is our compassion manward equal to our profession of religion Godward? As we follow Christ do we help men to come to Christ?

Luke records another event that occurred while Jesus was in Jericho that seems to suggest somewhat similar dangers and duties of the Christian church. There was in Jericho a rich, chief publican, named Zacchæus, who greatly desired to see Jesus as he was passing through the city. Zacchæus was moved by some nobler sentiment than mere morbid curiosity. His business was frowned upon by the representatives of religion, and he did not presume to press through the crowd and come boldly to Jesus. Being small of stature, he could not even catch a glimpse of him by standing at the wayside, but he was a resourceful man; he could overcome obstacles, and he did what a more dignified rich man would have considered ridiculous. He ascertained the point that Jesus would probably pass, and, running ahead of the crowd, he climbed into a sycamore tree by the wayside. He was willing to do all this in order to catch a glimpse of the man who could open the eyes of the blind, and who

claimed to be the promised Messiah. When Jesus came to the place he looked up, and calling Zacchæus by his name, said, "Make haste and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house." Zacchæus' surprise was lost sight of in the great joy that filled his heart. His sense of need had kindled a thirst that he had hoped to satisfy by a glimpse of Jesus as he was passing; but, now, he is granted the privilege of entertaining him as his guest. He came down with haste and joyfully welcomed Jesus to his home.

When the multitude saw it, they murmured, saying, "He is gone to lodge with a man that is a sinner." These murmurs and complaints against Christ's act were so general that Zacchæus was constrained to defend himself and to plead his own cause. He did not deny that he, a Jew, was in the service of the Roman government, collecting from his own nation a tax that they were very unwilling to pay; nor did he claim that he had always been just; but he does declare his present purpose as he says, "Lord the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully taken aught of any man, I restore four-fold." He had found the Christ, and he valued his approval above all else. He would restore four-fold where he has wronged any one, and half his goods would be devoted to helping those whose only claim upon him was their need. Our Lord approved his act, and said, "To-day is salvation come to this house, for as much as he also is a son of Abraham." Then, speaking to the multitude, Jesus defended his own course by saying, "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost."

In the light of these words, we see that, while Zacchæus was seeking Jesus, Jesus was also seeking Zacchæus. It was no more accident on Christ's part than on Zacchæus' part that they met in this strange way. While

Zacchæus was planning to see Jesus, Jesus planned to see Zacchæus and came to that tree with the purpose to spend the day at the publican's house. So it ever is. The man who in humble earnestness is seeking Jesus may be sure that Jesus is also seeking him.

Luke introduces his report of the parable of the Ten Pounds in such a way as to leave little doubt that it was spoken in the house of Zacchæus. Jericho is about fifteen miles from Jerusalem; and Luke, after recording the words of Jesus to Zacchæus and the murmuring multitude, goes on to say, "As they heard these things Jesus added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they supposed the kingdom of God was immediately to appear." These words seem to fix definitely the time, place and circumstances in which our Lord spake this parable, and it does not seem necessary to go farther in order to show that it cannot be identified with the parable of the talents reported by Matthew. We may say, too, in passing, that the whole structures of the two parables are so essentially different that they could not be identified without such violence to the sacred narrative as to compel us to give up all claims of the historical accuracy of the gospels.

The ground work of this parable is thought to have been derived from the history of Archelaus, son of Herod the Great. When Archelaus went to Rome to receive his kingdom the Jews sent protests; but the Emperor, Augustus, did not regard them. It was in accord with our Lord's method of drawing lessons from the lilies, and the grass, or the circumstances, that he should base this parable on a well known historical incident.

In the parable a nobleman, about to go into a far country to receive a kingdom and return, calls his ten servants and gives to them ten pounds, saying, "Trade ye here-

with till I come." By this arrangement each servant received a pound, about three dollars. But the citizens, who hated the nobleman, sent an ambassage after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. When the nobleman returns, having received his kingdom, he calls his servants, receives their reports and rewards them according to their faithfulness and efficiency. The one whose pound has gained ten pounds is given authority over ten cities; the one whose pound has gained five pounds is given authority over five cities, while the ungrateful, disloyal grumbler loses his talent, and it goes to swell the capacity and resources of the most faithful and efficient. When the bystanders remark that this man has ten pounds already, the nobleman proclaims the principle on which he is acting when he says, "Unto every one that hath shall be given, but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." Then the command is given to destroy the enemies that would not have the nobleman, now a king, to reign over them.

This parable is designed to illustrate certain phases of the kingdom of God. Christ is evidently the one who goes into a far country to receive his kingdom, and the citizens who rejected his rule are, first of all, the Jews, while the servants are his disciples. But the parable, in general, proclaims the nearness of our Lord's departure out of the world, his rejection by his own nation, the different degrees of faithfulness and efficiency of his servants, and his coming again in the power and glory of his kingdom to reward his servants and to punish those who reject him.

All the incidents recorded in connection with our Lord's passing through Jericho seem designed to warn Christians or professors of religion against the cold, compassionless spirit that would exclude any one from sharing in the

blessings of the gospel. The healing of the blind men, the interest in and the kindness toward Zacchæus, and the parable, spoken because they were near to Jerusalem and expecting the kingdom of God, combine to emphasize the great obligation of Christians to seek the lost and bring them to Jesus. Cain repudiated all obligation for any one but himself when he said, in haughty rebellion, "Am I my brother's keeper?" The spirit of Cain is the spirit of the world. The spirit of Christ is in direct opposition to that of Cain and of the world. By parable, miracle, precept and example, Jesus teaches that every man is his brother's keeper, that each one's responsibility for every other is measured by the need of that other and by his ability to help. The spirit of Cain breeds war, making man to his fellow man his sorest, surest enemy. The spirit of Christ is the world's great peace maker.



## JESUS IN BETHANY

John 12: 1. "Jesus therefore six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus raised from the dead."

(Mat. 26: 6-16; Mark 14: 3-11; Luke 22: 1; John 11: 55-12: 11.)

**L**EAVING Jericho on Friday, Nison 8, six days before the passover, Jesus, with his disciples and a great company of pilgrims, journeyed in the direction of Jerusalem. Toward evening, but before the setting sun had ushered in the Jewish Sabbath, he turned aside to Bethany, while the greater part of the company continued their journey to the holy city. The Sabbath was probably spent in the quiet home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus. How it was spent, we are not told, but where there were such bonds of friendship as existed between our Lord and the members of this family, we may well believe that this Sabbath would be long remembered as a day of hallowed rest, a day hardly less holy and delightful than one of the coming days in our heavenly Father's house. The Master and his friends were under the shadow of the cross; but they were in communion with God the Father and with one another. The inspired writers do not undertake to describe the experiences of that holy day in Bethany, but we know that, though it was the calm that preceded the coming storm, it was, at the same time, a calm that was filled with the peace of God that passeth all understanding.

In the evening, after the Sabbath, a feast was given in the house of "Simon the leper." Who this Simon the leper was we do not know. We know that he was not a leper at that time, for a leper could not have given a feast. It is possible that Simon was not living at that time and that the feast was given at a house of one who had been known as Simon the leper. It has been suggested that this was the name of the father of Mary, Martha and Lazarus, and that he was not living. It has been suggested also that Martha was a widow, and that this was the name of her deceased husband. These and other suggestions are only guesses. It is, however, most evident that this event cannot by any means be identified with the event recorded in the seventh chapter of Luke.

All we know of this feast is to be learned from John 12:1-8; Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9. From these sources we learn that the feast was in the house of Simon the leper; that the family at Bethany were the central figures; that Martha had the supervision of the feast and that the risen Lazarus was nearly as great an object of curious interest as was Jesus.

In the great event of the feast, in that incident for which the feast seems to be given so prominent a place in the sacred narratives, Mary is the chief actor. By this one act her name is destined to be linked with the name of Jesus wheresoever the gospel shall be preached. This family at Bethany were evidently far above the average Jewish family in wealth and refinement, and Mary had an alabaster cruse containing a pound of very precious and costly nard, worth about thirty dollars. Such ointment would ordinarily be used very sparingly; but, as Jesus reclined at the feast Mary took this precious ointment, broke the cruse, and poured the contents on his head and his feet, wiping his feet with her hair. It was

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the complete self abandon of adoring love. Mary did not stop to reckon the cost. Nothing in all the world was too costly to express her loving gratitude for her Lord. That cruse of nard, as its odor filled all the house, was a most fitting expression of a love that was all pervading, all controlling, but could find no adequate expression. She could have sung with fullness of meaning,

“Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small.”

Probably no one at the feast, except Jesus, was quite able to recognize the beauty and fitness of this act of Mary. One, at least, was present who was a stranger to the reality and beauty of self devoting love. He could see in this splendid act of faith and love no fitness, no beauty, only reckless waste, and he murmured, saying, “Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor?” He was, not only incapable of appreciating the love that prompted this act, but he coveted the money that might have been realized from the sale of the ointment; and this, not for the sake of the poor, as he professed, but for himself.

A more striking contrast than that presented by Mary and Judas can hardly be imagined. She was glad to put into one expression of love for her Lord three times as much as Judas afterwards received for betraying him to be crucified. Yet the words of Judas found response and approval even amongst the disciples, and some of them joined in his murmur of disapproval. Alas, that fault-finding should be of all diseases the most contagious! Where the purest and noblest deeds are criticized the blindest are the first to see the supposed defects! Our Lord answered the critic, saying, and we may well be-

lieve with deep and mingled emotions, "Suffer her to keep it against the day of my burying. For the poor ye have always with you, but me ye have not always." In the light of what took place in that week, we may see the profound pathos of these words. Jesus was going to his death, and was anointed for his burial, not only with precious ointment, but with the anointing of devoted, unselfish, inexpressible love.

No one in the company except Judas knew how near they were to the last act in the divine tragedy. The disciples knew that their Master was in great danger, and they had been in deep distress as they had heard him speak of what he was to suffer at Jerusalem, but they still cherished the hope that the great calamity might be averted. Judas had not, even in purpose, committed his great crime when he came to that feast. Our Lord had seen from the beginning the seed that was developing in the heart of the traitor, and had said, "Did I not choose you the twelve, and one of you is a devil?" Judas did not know at this time that he would betray his Master, for Luke describes what took place at this feast when he says, "Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, one of the twelve."

Fame and infamy are often achieved unconsciously. At this feast, two persons erected to themselves everlasting memorials. Mary's act placed her before the Christian church in all coming ages as the personification of inexpressible love and devotion, and the words of Judas proclaimed him the personification of selfishness, covetousness and avarice.

Up to this time Judas probably felt that his own selfish interests could be secured by concealing his real character and following Jesus; but now Jesus has come between him and the idol his covetous soul worshipped, and he

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determined to betray his Master. After the feast, under cover of the night, he sought the chief priests, either in Bethany or by going to Jerusalem, less than two miles distant, and said, "What are you willing to give me and I will deliver him unto you?" The chief priests and captains were glad, and, having made their wicked bargain, weighed him out thirty pieces of silver, about one-third of the value of the ointment that love had poured on the head and on the feet of Jesus. This act fully warranted the words of the evangelist John that Judas cared not for the poor, but was a thief and coveted the price of the ointment. The die was cast. The crime of the ages was planned and only awaited the favorable opportunity for its execution. Love had anointed Jesus for his burial and covetous hatred had planned the murder of the Son of God.



## LV

### THE FIRST DAY OF PASSION WEEK

Matthew 21:5. "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee."

Mark 11:19. "Hosanna! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

(Matthew 21:1-17; Mark 11:1-11 and 15-18; Luke 19:29-48; John 12:12-36.)

**T**HE general outline of events during the different days of Passion Week is evident, but the exact order of the different incidents and discourses cannot always be certainly known. We have, therefore, included in this chapter the events that seem to have occurred on the first day of this Jewish week.

On the first day of the week, Jesus and his disciples and the company of friends, pilgrims and visitors, who had spent the Sabbath in Bethany, started toward Jerusalem. About the same time a great multitude from Jerusalem started out over the Mount of Olives to meet him. From the time he had raised Lazarus from the dead, he had been the topic of conversation and the center of attraction for nearly all the dwellers in the Holy City. The chief priests and rulers talked of him, for they were perfecting their plans to put him to death, and they were hoping that he might come up to the passover, so that they might be able to put their plans into execution. They had lost sight of him when he went to Ephraim and they had given commandment that if any one knew where he was, he should show it. The common people had heard his words or seen his miracles, and wished to see One who could,

not only heal the sick, but raise the dead. Many had come to Bethany when they heard that Jesus was spending the Sabbath there, and many others, expecting him to come to Jerusalem on the first day of the week, went out over the Mount of Olives to meet him.

On the Mount of Olives, between Bethany and Jerusalem, was a village called Bethphage, and to this village Christ sent two of his disciples on what must have seemed to them a remarkable errand. He said, "Go into the village that is over against you and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her; loose them and bring them unto me. And if any one say aught unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him." The disciples obeyed their Master and found everything just as he had said. In this manner the way was prepared for the fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy that Zion's King should come riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass.

Going from Bethany to Jerusalem, our Lord probably took the nearest route from Bethany to the caravan road, leading from Jericho to the Holy City and entered Jerusalem by this road. Dean Stanley, speaking of this road, says, "It soon loses sight of Bethany. It is now a rough but well defined mountain track, winding over rock and loose stones; a deep declivity on the left, the sloping shoulder of Olivet above on the right; fig trees, above and below, here and there growing out of the rocky soil." At the point in this road nearest to Bethphage, "the house of figs," three companies met, the company with our Lord, the company from Bethphage, following the two disciples who brought the young ass, and the multitude that had come out from Jerusalem. Neither the disciples nor the promiscuous crowd thought of assisting in the fulfillment of any prophecy, and all acted on the impulse of the

moment. The disciples flung their garments on the colt and set their Master thereon; then, as they moved forward, a mighty wave of enthusiasm swept over the surging multitude, and they spread their garments and the branches of palm, olive and fig trees in the way, and cried aloud, "Hosanna, Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord." It was no premeditated insurrection or rebellion against the Roman authority. It was not the triumphant entrance of a conqueror clothed in armor and seated on a war horse; it was the coming of Zion's meek, but mightiest King, seated on a young ass. No man had planned it, but God had decreed it, and prophets had proclaimed it hundreds of years before it occurred. There was intense excitement. A few, no doubt, felt themselves stirred by some great, undefined hope; many were moved by intense but blind enthusiasm, and a few looked on with uncontrollable indignation. Some of these last came to Jesus and asked him to rebuke his disciples, but he replied, "If these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out."

Was Jesus deceived and deluded by this sudden outburst of enthusiasm? Did he imagine that the danger was averted, and that he might yet escape from his enemies at Jerusalem? Let the evangelist answer, as he describes what occurred when the procession came around the Mount of Olives and looked upon Jerusalem. Other evangelists describe the unrestrained enthusiasm of the multitude, but Luke says that when Jesus saw the city, he wept over it, saying, "If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things that belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."

Jesus knew that this scene on Olivet was but the fulfillment of a prophecy; he knew, also, that the other prophecies concerning himself would be fulfilled. He

foresaw that some of those who were now shouting, "Hosanna," would soon join in the cry, "Crucify him." His prophetic eye took in that more distant future, that day of Judgment when Jerusalem should be besieged by great Roman armies and so utterly destroyed that one stone should not be left upon another. This prediction on the Mount of Olives, accented with tears and sobs, was literally fulfilled when the Roman army, under Titus, was compelled by Jewish fanaticism, not only to destroy the city and the temple, but to almost exterminate the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Jesus was not deluded by the enthusiasm of the fickle populace, for he knew what was in man, and he knew also the divine purpose that involved his own death on the cross and the destruction of the temple.

Jesus entered the Holy City amid the rejoicings of the multitude that accompanied him. His weeping over the doomed city quieted their enthusiasm, and, instead of proclaiming him "the King that cometh in the name of the Lord," as they had done on the Mount of Olives, they said, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee," and, when they came to the foot of Mount Moriah, the procession dissolved in order to make the necessary preparation for entering the temple.

When Jesus entered the temple, his righteous indignation was kindled, as it had been at the beginning of his public ministry when he found his Father's house had been made a mere market place, a house of merchandise. It is probable that his cleansing of the temple at the beginning of his ministry had restrained avarice and covetousness for a time, but three years had elapsed, and the lesson had been forgotten. The old sacrilegious customs had been resumed. Multitudes were selling and buying within the sacred precincts. Again the Lord of the temple

came suddenly to his temple and cleansed it, casting out all who sold and bought, overthrowing the tables of the money changers and saying, "It is written, my Father's house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of robbers."

The chief priests and other rulers of the Jews had been discussing the question whether Jesus would dare to come to the passover feast, and had issued orders that if any one knew where he was, he should make it known in order that they might arrest him. These rulers both feared and hated Jesus, and, no doubt, some of them would have been satisfied if they could have so intimidated him as to have prevented his coming to Jerusalem. But, while they were speaking of him as though he were a fugitive seeking concealment, he suddenly appeared and put an end to the sacrilegious traffic that they had sanctioned. The high priest's family and other Jewish rulers had a financial interest in this temple traffic that Jesus interrupted, but they did not dare to oppose him or challenge his authority because they feared the people.

In immediate connection with his account of the cleansing of the temple, Matthew tells us that the blind and the lame came to Jesus in the temple, and that he healed them; and adds, "When the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children that were crying in the temple, and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they were moved with indignation, and said unto him, "Hearest thou what these are saying?" To this question Jesus replied, "Yea; did ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?"

In all this we have a good illustration of the difference between the spirit of Jesus Christ and the spirit of these Jewish rulers. Jesus was filled with indignation when he



saw the temple profaned by covetous, dishonest traffic that was sanctioned by the Jewish rulers. The Jewish rulers were filled with indignation when they saw Jesus healing the lame and the blind, and when they heard the children reechoing the glad cry that had been heard that morning on the Mount of Olives, "Hosanna to the Son of David."

If we would form any adequate picture of the scene at the temple that afternoon, we must remember that nearly three million people were assembled at Jerusalem at this passover feast. Pilate, the Roman Governor, with a strong guard of soldiers, had come from Cæsarea and was anxiously guarding against riots and insurrection. Herod, Tetrarch of Galilee, was also there to make political capital out of his religious professions. For three years Jesus had been teaching and working miracles and his fame had gone abroad so that the whole Jewish nation seemed like a slumbering volcano. Jesus was teaching in the temple, his enemies were conspiring for his destruction, and only divine wisdom knew what the outcome would be. The prophet from Nazareth was the great center of interest and the great topic of conversation. He had mortally offended the Jewish rulers by exposing their selfishness and hypocrisy, by throwing the light of truth on their false traditions, and by interfering with their covetous sacrilege. He had kindled the hopes of the common people by his wondrous words and his mighty works. The scene on the Mount of Olives and in the temple indicated such possibilities that the rulers were afraid to make any decided move, but they said amongst themselves, "Behold, how ye prevail nothing; lo, the world is gone after him."

It was probably on the evening of that first day of the week, after the triumphant entrance into the city, and

after the cleansing of the temple, that a company of Greeks, who had come to Jerusalem to worship, sought an interview with Jesus. Jesus was teaching in the temple, and these Greeks came to Philip, who after conferring with Andrew, came and told Jesus. Whether these Greeks were introduced to Jesus we are not told; but the record indicates that their request gave a new direction to his discourse. When he was a little child, wise men from the East had brought their gifts and had worshipped the new born King of the Jews; and, now, as he drew near to the end of his mortal life, the coming of these Greeks from the West seemed to fix his thoughts on his great mission, and he said, "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily I say unto you, except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit. He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be; if any man serve me, him will my Father honour."

In these words, Jesus reveals the philosophy of life in this sin-cursed world. Death is the essential condition of life. Self-saving is only possible through willing self-sacrifice, and selfishness is suicide. Having said this, Jesus fixed his thoughts on the part that he had accepted in the outworking of this philosophy of life, for he said, "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father save me from this hour." He saw the shadow of the cross, and shrunk from its horrors. But then he remembered that for this cause he had become incarnate and had come to that hour of agony, and he exclaimed, "Father, glorify thy name."

In answer to this prayer there came an audible response from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again." Some of those who stood by and heard the voice, said it had thundered, and others declared that an angel had spoken to him, but Jesus said, "This voice hath not come for my sake, but for your sakes."

As Jesus heard the voice from heaven, he seemed to see the triumph that should follow his sufferings and death. He had met the prince of this world at the beginning of his public ministry, and had resisted his temptations, and now he saw the complete overthrow of this enemy, and exclaimed, "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself." He was going to the cross, but he went there to fight the battle of his people, and to secure their liberty from the dominion of Satan. It was the *crisis* in the world's history. The prince of this world was coming and had nothing in him. There would be no compromise in the last struggle, the prince of this world must be cast out, and Christ on the cross would be the great center of attraction, drawing all men unto himself. He had been proclaimed the Saviour of the world; he had proclaimed himself the Light of the world, and now he declared that, if he were lifted up from the earth, he would become the great center of beneficent attraction.

The Jews were bewildered by what Jesus said about being lifted up from the earth. He spoke of it before, saying that, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so the Son of man must be lifted up. They could not fathom our Lord's meaning and they said, "Who is this Son of man?"

We are not left in doubt as to the meaning of words that puzzled the Jews, for the inspired evangelist inter-

prets them, declaring that Jesus said this to signify what death he should die. In the light of what took place a few days afterwards we cannot but see in these words a definite prophecy that Jesus Christ dying on the cross would be the great center of attraction for a lost world. Nor can we fail to see in subsequent history, and in the present condition of the world, a marvelous fulfillment of this strange prediction. Christ on the cross is to-day the great center of beneficent attraction for men of every race and nation. Millions are singing to-day,

"In the cross of Christ I glory,  
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;  
All the light of sacred story  
Gathers round its head sublime."

On the cross Jesus Christ won and established a kingdom world-wide and eternal, a kingdom built on the solid rock of self-sacrificing love. He saw his death on the cross, not as a defeat, but as a complete victory over the prince of this world. By his being lifted up on the cross, the prince of this world was cast out.

Having completed this discourse and exhorted his hearers to walk in the light during the little time that the light was to be with them, Jesus was hidden from his enemies by going out into the Mount of Olives into the neighbourhood of Bethany. While he was teaching in the daytime his enemies were afraid to have him arrested, for the people, "all hung upon him listening." Had he remained in the city during the night, he would probably have been arrested. It is probable that he did not spend his nights at the home of his friends in Bethany, but on the Mount of Olives in that neighbourhood. His enemies were afraid of him in day light, and he did not put himself in their power during the night, for his hour was not yet come.

## LVI

### MONDAY OF PASSION WEEK

Mat. 21: 18. "Now in the morning as he returned to the city he hungered. And seeing a fig tree by the wayside, he came to it, and found nothing thereon but leaves only; and he saith unto it, Let there be no fruit from thee henceforward forever."

Mat. 21: 18-22: 14; Mark 11: 12-14, 19-12: 12; Luke 20: 1-18.)

**T**WO considerations lead us to conclude that the events treated in this chapter occurred on Monday rather than on Tuesday. First, it is evident that none of the evangelists narrate these events in the exact order in which they occurred, and we are left to determine the probable order by comparing the different narratives, and considering the circumstances. Second, if we place the events on Tuesday, we find so many events and discourses crowded into the ministry of that day as to more than fill the entire day, while we leave Christ at Jerusalem on Monday with no record of his doing or saying anything, unless we assume that this was the day of the second cleansing of the temple. Our placing the cleansing of the temple on "Palm Sunday," and these events on Monday, does no violence to any of the inspired narratives, and so distributes the incidents and discourses as to fill all the days and not unduly crowd one day while others are left unfilled. The reasonableness of this statement will appear as we proceed.

At the close of the first exciting day of Passion week, Jesus was hidden from his enemies by going out into the



Mount of Olives. He spent the night in the neighbourhood of Bethany, if not in the village, but it is probable that the reasons that kept him from staying in Jerusalem during the night would prevent his going to the house of Mary, Martha and Lazarus, where his enemies might expect to find him.

In other great crises Jesus spent a large part of his nights alone with the Father, and it is probable that he spent this night in the same way. However this may be, Monday morning found him on his way to Jerusalem without breakfast, for "he hungered." As he came out from Bethany he saw in the distance, probably in the neighbourhood of Bethphage, "the house of figs," a fig tree having leaves. It was not the season for ripe figs but it was not the season for leaves, and the presence of leaves indicated that there might be fruit. When Jesus came to the tree "he found nothing but leaves," and he said, "No man eat fruit from thee henceforward forever." Matthew says, "immediately the fig tree withered away," while Mark says, "as they passed in the morning they saw the big tree withered away from the roots," and that Peter called the Master's attention to it.

There is no real conflict between these two narratives. Mark gives the more minute and detailed account. There may have been instantaneous evidence of the beginning to wither that would fully warrant the statement of Matthew, while the complete withering of the root and branch, seen the next morning, would be adapted to suggest the remark of Peter and lead to the discourse of our Lord concerning the power of faith.

This miracle of Jesus has been objected to by irreverent critics who claim that it was an exhibition of unreasonable impatience. The narratives of the evangelists do not warrant any such criticism. The tone, the manner

and motive for this miracle are so evident that no one who believes the record would think of making any objection. He who refused to command stones to become bread when he had fasted forty days, would not be moved to anger by, and would not seek to wreak his vengeance on an inanimate object. No such thought is possible to the believer, or to any one who in any degree understands the mind and spirit of Jesus the Christ. The leaves on this barren fig tree, like the flowers in the field, afforded special opportunity to teach his disciples important lessons. It was not the special season for figs, but figs are found on the trees in this region at all seasons, and the presence of leaves on this tree indicated figs, so that it became a fit emblem of the hypocrite. It was an apt emblem of Israel, the barren fig tree in the garden of the Lord, and this judgment on the fig tree was adapted to impress the disciples with God's hatred of hypocrisy.

The miracle was adapted and was used to teach a great lesson as to the omnipotence of faith. No possible question of Jesus' right to end the existence of the fig tree in this way could arise in the mind of one who recognized his power to perform the miracle. If the owner of an orchard can cut down the barren tree as a cumberer of the ground, if God can level the forest by the tornado, cannot our Lord, by the utterance of a word, put an end to the existence of this fruitless tree in order to teach his disciples great and important lessons? In this miracle the disciples see with astonishment their Master's power, but, by and by, they see symbolized the judgment awaiting the barren tree of Judaism, and they are taught the unlimited possibilities of the prayer of faith, and the necessity for the spirit of forgiveness.

When our Lord returned to Jerusalem and was walking in the temple, a deputation of chief priests and scribes

met him and said, "By what authority doest thou these things." or, "who gave thee this authority to do these things?" The special things referred to, no doubt, were the things connected with the cleansing of the temple. When Jesus overthrew the tables of the money changers and put a stop to the disgraceful and dishonest traffic in the temple, these rulers had not dared to question his authority, but they probably conferred together and their courage revived, and they came to Jesus to challenge his right to interfere. They expected an answer that could be used against him, for they were conspiring for his destruction; but they were disappointed. Instead of giving them an answer, he asked them a question, saying, "The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or from men?"

This was a pertinent question. They assumed to question him as to his teachings and acts, because they claimed authority in matters of religion. If they really had authority and were competent judges, they must be able to inform the people as to the authority of the teachings of John the Baptist. Jesus agreed that, if they would answer his question concerning John, he would answer their question concerning himself. He revealed their true character by putting them in a dilemma. Instead of being honest leaders of the people, they were mere time-servers and self-seekers. They would not say anything that they thought would render them unpopular, and they did not dare to deny that John was a true prophet because they feared the people who reckoned John a prophet. On the other hand, they knew that if they confessed that John was a true prophet, they would be compelled to confess Jesus as the Christ to whom John bore witness. They were not willing to accept either horn of the dilemma, and said, "We know not." Our Lord then replied,

"Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things." It was a fair answer. They either were authoritative judges of religious teachers, or they were not. If they were, they could assign to John his place; and, if they could not do that, they had no right to question Christ. If they had come to Christ as honest seekers after truth, his answer would have been very different; but this answer was designed and adapted to expose their true character and their false pretenses as religious leaders.

In immediate connection with his record of this discomfiture of chief priests and rulers, the evangelist Matthew reports a parable so pertinent to the occasion that we may regard it as the conclusion of his answer.

In the parable a man has two sons. Coming to the first, and addressing him in the words of affection, he bids him go and work in the vineyard. The son answers disobediently and disrespectfully, "I will not," but he afterwards repents and goes. The other son is addressed in the same affectionate language, and replies promptly and obediently, "I will sir," but does not go. Having spoken the parable, Jesus said to these religious rulers of the people, "Whether of the two did the will of his father?" There could be but one answer, and they gave it, as they said, "the first." Had they been as cautious as they were in their answer concerning John's authority, they would have said, "We cannot tell," for by their answer they were convicted. Like the second son, they had made great professions of religion, while the publicans and harlots had professed to be irreligious; yet, when John came to them in the way of righteousness, preaching and personifying righteousness, they rejected his teachings, while publicans and harlots believed him. They were acting like the first son, and Jesus said, "Verily, I say unto you, the

publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before you."

The teaching of the parable could not be misunderstood. The publicans and harlots do not enter the kingdom because they are publicans and harlots, but because they repent. They do not break any promise by turning from a life of sin to a life of holiness, and they are saved by their inconsistency. The great lesson of the parable is for those who profess to be faithful and are unfaithful. They violate their covenant and add falsehood to disobedience. The fig tree with leaves, but with no fruit, is, not only worthless, but deludes and disappoints; and the man who makes a profession of religion is worse than disobedient and worthless—a professed laborer in the Lord's vineyard, he deludes and deceives those who depend on him.

The parable of the two sons is not reported by any of the evangelists except Matthew, but it is followed by the parable of the wicked husbandman, which is reported by Matthew, Mark and Luke. The parable of the two sons seems to lead to this more elaborate parable. The parable of the two sons puts unbelieving, impenitent Jewish rulers in bad contrast with believing, penitent publicans and harlots; but this parable paints in still darker colors the murderous spirit of these Jewish rulers who have already planned and conspired for the destruction of Jesus.

In this parable a householder plants a vineyard, sets a hedge about it, erects a tower, digs a wine press, and does everything necessary to warrant him in expecting abundant fruit. He then lets it out to husbandmen and goes into another country. When the time to collect revenues has come, he sends servants to receive of the fruits; but the husbandmen beat one, kill another and stone a third. Other servants are then sent with like



results, and the long suffering owner sends his son, saying, "They will reverence my son." When the husbandmen see the son, they say amongst themselves, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and take his inheritance"; and this they do.

Having spoken the parable Jesus said, "When, therefore, the Lord of the vineyard shall come, what will he do unto those husbandmen?" All who hear cry out, "He will miserably destroy those miserable men, and will let out the vineyard to other husbandmen, who shall render him his fruits in their season." David did not answer the parable of the prophet Nathan with more righteous indignation, and David was not more clearly convicted when Nathan said, "Thou art the man." But the parable did not seem to be understood by the rulers until Jesus said unto them, "Did ye never read in the Scriptures,

The stone which the builders rejected,  
The same was made the head of the corner;  
This was from the Lord,  
And it is marvellous in our eyes?

Therefore, I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given unto a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

Israel was God's vineyard. He had planted the vineyard and hedged it in; he had sent prophets, whom they had rejected and beaten and slain, and now when he had sent his Son, they were planning to kill him. The analogy seems complete; but the chief priests and Pharisees seemed as unconscious that they were looking at a portrait of themselves and of the Jewish nation as was David listening to Nathan. To David, Nathan needed to say, "Thou art the man"; and, to these Jewish rulers, Jesus

needed to say, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you." Then they perceive that he was speaking of them.

When the Pharisees and chief priests perceived that Jesus was describing them, and that they had pronounced their own condemnation, they would have laid hold on him, but were restrained by their fear of the people, and Jesus proceeded with his discourse, speaking to them in the parables of the marriage of the King's son and of the wedding garments. These two parables blend into one, but the first is a complete picture in itself, and serves as the setting for the second.

This parable of the marriage of the king's son resembles in its general outlines the parable of the great supper or of the excuses, recorded in the fourteenth chapter of Luke. In that parable more prominence is given to the quality of the excuses, and the feast is not a marriage feast, and is not given by a king, as in this case. There are other striking contrasts, as well as resemblances. This parable is linked in thought with the parable of the wicked husbandmen. In the parable of the wicked husbandmen the son of the owner of the vineyard is murdered; in this parable, the invitations are treated with indifference and contempt. The son is a central figure in both parables.

In this parable a king makes a marriage feast for his son; first, sending out his invitations, and then, at the appointed time, sending his servants to call them that were bidden. The invited guests refuse to come, and the king then sends other servants to announce that all the preparations have been made for the feast, that the oxen and fatlings have been killed, that all things are ready, and to say, "Come to the marriage feast." The invitation is most urgent, but some treat it with indifference and go their several ways, while others abuse and slay the messengers

of the king. This, like the parable of the wicked husbandmen, presents a most aggravating picture, but our Lord, instead of asking his hearers to pass judgment on the rebels who have treated their sovereign with such contempt, goes on to say, "The King was wroth; and he sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and burned their city." After the royal honour has been vindicated and justice satisfied, servants are again sent out and a general invitation is given to all who could be found, wherever they could be found, and the wedding was supplied with guests.

The parable was prophetic, and, therefore, not so easily understood by those to whom it was addressed. In the light of subsequent history its application to the Jewish people is most evident. They, as a nation, were the specially invited guests; they treated the King with contempt, refusing to come to the marriage feast of his Son, and shamefully treating and murdering his servants. Their judgment came, and Jerusalem, their holy city, was destroyed. Nevertheless, while this parable described the Jews, it had a wider scope than the Jewish nation. Men and women, born and reared in Christian lands, are to-day treating the invitation to the marriage feast with indifference. There are to-day all the classes that are seen in the parable. One goes to his farm, another to his merchandise, and others persecute the servants who urge them to accept the King's invitation. The judgment on Jerusalem, with all its attendant horrors, was only a shadow of the greater judgment of those who reject the great salvation that the gospel offers.

This parable, complete in itself, prepares the way for, and becomes part of another parable that seems peculiarly adapted as a warning to the gentiles. When the invited guests showed their unworthiness by failing to ap-

preciate their privileges, the servants went out into the highways and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good, and the wedding was furnished with guests. But, when the king came in to see the guests, he found one who did not have a wedding garment, and he said, "Friend, how comest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?" The man was speechless. He could offer no explanation and had no excuse. Then the king said to the servants, "Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." In explanation of this last act in the parable, our Lord added, "Many are called, but few are chosen."

If the thought of unreasonable severity is suggested by reading this parable, it will disappear when the real meaning is recognized. It is most evident, without any reference to the custom of kings providing a wedding garment for invited guests, that this parable is based on the supposition that the wedding garment was offered to, or could be procured by every guest, and that the failure to have the necessary and becoming wedding garment was the result of lack of reverence for the king and lack of appreciation of the feast. It showed peculiar disrespect for the king. His standard had not been lowered on account of the disrespect shown him by the guests that had refused to come, and this man's coming without the wedding garment was as disrespectful as the refusal of those who were first invited.

There is in the parable a great and impressive practical lesson for the Christian church. The failure of the Jews to appreciate God's goodness to them, has not lowered God's standard of admission to his kingdom and to the marriage supper. He is condescending, but not at the expense of his holiness. The sinfulness of others affords

no excuse for our presumption. God's goodness in providing salvation for all who will accept, for good and bad, Jew and Gentile, will only aggravate the sin of those who refuse to accept the robe of righteousness that he has provided. If any one dreams that, since so many men are notoriously wicked, God must lower his standard in order to save any, let him learn from this parable that God sits on no precarious throne, that the fear of the Lord is still the beginning of wisdom. Publicans and sinners, gentiles, as well as Jews, are invited to the gospel feast, and, if they come with humble, penitent gratitude, they will be made welcome; but there is no lowering of the standard of holiness. "Many are called but few are chosen." The urgent appeals of evangelists to the unconverted in Christian lands, the full, free and continuous offers of the gospel to the heathen world do not warrant the presumptuous conclusion that God has lowered his standard of holiness. This parable of the wedding garment reaffirms the great truth that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord."



## LVII

### TUESDAY OF PASSION WEEK

Matthew 22:15. "Then went the Pharisees and took counsel how they might ensnare him in his talk."

(Matthew 22:15-25:56; Mark 12:13-13:37; Luke 20:20-21:38.)

**T**HE events of Tuesday, the last great day of our Lord's public ministry, include his discourses to the multitude in the temple during the day, and his discourse to his own disciples out on the Mount of Olives during the evening.

If we had no other source of information than the gospel by Mark, we might feel constrained to include in the events of Tuesday the Pharisees' challenge of Christ's authority, and the parables of the wicked husbandmen, the marriage feast and the wedding garment; but the evangelist Matthew, after recording the parable of the wedding garment, says, "Then went the Pharisees and took counsel how they might ensnare him in his talk." This indicates that considerable time, probably a night, intervened between the delivery of that parable and the events that are reported as taking place afterwards. Mark also intimates that some time had elapsed between the delivery of the parable of the wicked husbandmen and the events that he reports as taking place afterwards, for he says, "The Pharisees left him and went their way when they discovered that Jesus had spoken of

them." We, therefore, have assumed that the parables of the wicked husbandmen and of the marriage feast were spoken on Monday; that a conference of Christ's enemies was held on Monday night, and that this conference made some definite plans for obtaining evidence against Jesus that would enable them to destroy him. The result of this conference appeared Tuesday morning when the young disciples of the Pharisees and Herodians came to Jesus, saying, "Master, we know that thou art true, and carest not for any one; for thou regardest not the person of men, but of a truth teachest the way of God; Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar or not? Shall we give or shall we not give?"

Here was a cunningly devised snare. These were young men, and it seemed befitting that they should seek the right answer to this mooted question. They were young, and they belonged to different parties; an answer that would approve the position of the Herodians would condemn the position of the Pharisees; they would not, therefore, be suspected of conspiring together against the Teacher to whom they had appealed. He might certainly infer that he could depend on the support of those whose position he approved, even if the other party should be arrayed against him.

If it were possible to do so, one would gladly believe that these young men did not know the purpose for which they had been sent to Jesus. That young men should be such adepts in political and ecclesiastical treachery; that young men should come to a great and conscientious teacher, commending his courage and truthfulness, in order to ensnare him; that young men should be scheming hypocrites, one would not believe if it were possible to believe otherwise. But we are shut up to this conclusion; for Jesus knew their motives and

said, "Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?" He was not deceived by their conspiracy, and was not ensnared by their treachery. He knew what was in man, and saw in these young men that fatal malady, hypocrisy. Nevertheless, he answered their question in such a way as to escape their snare, and yet give a lesson that will enable true disciples in all ages to see their relations to the civil governments under which they live. First, he said to the inquirers, "Show me the tribute money;" and, when they had brought him a penny, he said, "Whose is this image and superscription?" They answered, "Cæsar's." Then he said, "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's."

This answer did not evade the question. The Jews were living under and enjoying the protection of the Roman government, and they were under obligation to bear a fair share of the burdens of civil government. They should render to Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's. On the other hand, their paying taxes and obeying the laws of the civil government did not release them from their obligations to God. Their duty to Cæsar would not conflict with their duty to God. If Cæsar commanded them to disobey God, he was demanding what was not Cæsar's, and they were to render unto God the things that were God's; but, so long as it was a matter of paying taxes for the support of the civil government, whose benefits they accepted and whose coin they used, their duty to Cæsar did not conflict with their duty to God.

This answer, that throws a flood of light on this question whensoever and wheresoever it may arise, did not afford any ground of accusation against Jesus. If he had said that it was unlawful to give tribute to Cæsar,

he could have been accused of rebellion or treason, and this accusation was actually made at his trial; if he had said that it was lawful, he could have been accused of betraying his own nation and joining the gentile oppressors of God's peculiar people. The answer he gave could not be used against him by either Jewish rulers or the Roman government.

By this answer Christ's disciples are taught to bear cheerfully their full share of all the necessary burdens of civil government; by this answer, the disciples of Christ are taught to use all lawful means to make the government under which they live honest, just, pure—a terror to evil doers, the praise, encouragement and protection of all who do well, the ordinance of God for justice. Only in this way can they render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and to God the things that are God's. The man who neglects or refuses to perform all his political duties disobeys Christ.

After the disciples of the Pharisees and Herodians had heard our Lord's answer and gone away astonished, defeated, rebuked and instructed, the Sadducees came to him with a question that seemed designed to puzzle him and to ridicule the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. It was, however, a question that only revealed their own curious, flippant, self-complacent ignorance. Like the disciples of the Pharisees and Herodians, they were not honest seekers after truth and light; but, unlike the Pharisees, they were disposed to ridicule the great doctrine of a future life and all other great religious truths. They were not therefore so bitterly arrayed against any religious teacher. They would only become the deadly enemies of Christ when they discovered that he was interfering with their sensual pleasures and their worldly gains.

These Sadducees presumed to ridicule or refute the doctrine of the resurrection by presenting a real or imaginary case where, according to the law of Moses, seven brothers had in succession become the husbands of one woman. Having told how each one, on the death of his brother, had married this woman and died, they say, "Whose wife shall she be in the resurrection?" Our Lord answered their question by saying, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven."

In this answer to a curious, quibbling question, Jesus gives us a glimpse of the life of his redeemed people as they dwell in the Father's house in the eternal years. The Pharisees had answered this question by saying that the woman should be the wife of her first husband, but Jesus said, "In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage." Then he added, "Have ye not read in the book of Moses in the place concerning the Bush, how God spake unto him saying, I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, ye do greatly err."

In this answer Jesus teaches his disciples that the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead was definitely taught in the Old Testament.

The Pharisees could hardly fail to rejoice in the confusion and silencing of the Sadducees, but they did not abandon their malicious purpose against Jesus; and one of their number, a lawyer and a scribe, in order to tempt or test him, said, "Master, which is the great commandment of the law?" The answer of Jesus to the question of the young Pharisees and Herodians had disposed of the questions concerning the civil rights and



duties of God's people; his answer to the Sadducees had silenced their objections to the doctrine of the resurrection, and had revealed some of heaven's secrets, but now a different field for discussion is opened up by this mooted question concerning the relative importance of the different precepts of God's law.

This question had been discussed at great length by learned rabbis, but Jesus answered it in such a way as to show the foolishness of these rabbinical, and the later Jesuitical, discussions, when he said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." When the lawyer heard the answer, he replied, "Of a truth, Master, thou hast well said." He could not withhold his approval. This summing up of the law of God was not new to him, for, as a student of the law, he only needed to combine Deuteronomy, 10: 12, with Leviticus, 19: 18, to give this as the whole law of God; and a lawyer on a former occasion had given to Christ a similar summary of the law. Nevertheless, it was new to him as an answer to the question he had asked, and it gave the final answer to that question. Forgetting the motive that had prompted the question, satisfied with the sincerity and fullness of the answer, the lawyer expressed his approval, and Jesus knowing his thoughts, as well as hearing his words, replied, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."

In order to estimate the wisdom manifested in Christ's answer to these questions, it is necessary to bear in mind that all these discussions did not require more than a few hours of a busy and exciting day. Had the supreme courts of church and state been asked to formulate answers to these questions, or other questions of equal

scope and importance, weeks and months would have been consumed in deliberating; but these definite, comprehensive and conclusive answers were given without hesitation. When Nicodemus saw the works of Christ, he said, "Thou art a teacher come from God;" but the wisdom of Jesus, as well as his power, proclaims his divine origin and authority.

After this no one ventured to ask Jesus any questions, but he asks the Pharisees a question, saying, "What think ye of the Christ? Whose son is he?" This was not equivalent to asking what the Pharisees thought of Jesus, for the Pharisees did not recognize him as the Christ. This question concerned the Christ or Messiah of prophecy for whom they were looking and the Pharisees so understood it. Nevertheless, they recognized an indirect reference to Jesus who claimed to be the Christ, and they tried to answer in such a way as to not admit his claim, when they said, "the son of David." Jesus claimed to be the Son of God as well as the Son of David, and the answer of the Pharisees meant that they were not looking for a divine Christ. But Jesus, from their own scriptures, showed the insufficiency of their answer, as he said, "How then doth David in the Spirit call him Lord, saying,

The lord said unto my Lord,  
Sit thou on my right hand,  
Till I put thine enemies under thy feet?

If David then call him Lord, how is he his Son?"

To this question the Pharisees could give no answer, and their confusion was so complete and so evident that they were silenced, and the common people heard Jesus gladly. Jesus had answered all their questions finally and for all time, but his question assumed a broader

scope and has become the question of all the ages. Its answer determines the destiny of him who answers it.

It may not be amiss to note the incidental recognition of the inspiration of the Psalms of David in our Lord's question, "How then doth David in the Spirit call him Lord?" David, like other Old Testament prophets, may not have comprehended the full import of his own words, when, by the Spirit, he wrote, "Jehovah said unto Adonai, sit thou on my right hand;" but the Spirit of God spake through him in words of divine wisdom. He was one of those who spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

When Jesus began his public ministry, the scribes and the Pharisees were recognized as the teachers and religious leaders of the Jews. They were the zealous defenders and conservators of all the recognized forms of religion, not because they loved and revered old truths, but because they had a selfish interest in the existing religious institutions. By strict observance of all the minute forms of religion they maintained their reputation for superior piety. When Jesus began to teach the worthlessness of religious forms where there was no spiritual life, they were astute enough to see that he was undermining and destroying their influence. They would have arranged a compromise if it had been possible, but between his spirit and theirs there was no possibility of compromise. They were as mutually hostile as light and darkness. One or the other must give way. Their whole system was built on vanity, deceit, worldly policy, selfishness and hypocrisy, while Christ was honest, open, generous, self-sacrificing. Whenever they came in contact, opposition was developed. Patiently and perseveringly Jesus told them the truth, exposing their ignorance, arrogance and hypocrisy, and, as he did so, their envy de-

veloped into a deadly hatred. But the time has come for a complete and final unmasking of these false leaders, and to this Jesus devotes the last hours of this last day of his teaching in the temple.

We have only a brief reference to this last public discourse by Mark and Luke, as they tell us that Jesus publicly warned his disciples against the scribes with their long robes, long prayers and petty ambitions; but Matthew gives us an extended report of this calm, deliberate and terrible arraignment. No one, who has learned the real spirit of Jesus, will find in this arraignment a mere outburst of anger and righteous indignation. The language is intense, direct and terrible; but, when we have read the whole discourse, we cannot fail to find in it the intensity of sadness and distress. Jesus saw clearly the bitter, murderous, hatred of these scribes and Pharisees; he knew of the bargain they had already made with his betrayer; he knew that before the end of the passover feast these men would satiate their thirst for vengeance and see him crucified; yet, it was not so much in anger as in sorrow, that he exclaimed, "Woe unto you scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites!" He saw the doom they were bringing on themselves, and the destruction they were bringing on the city of Jerusalem; he had wept over Jerusalem, and now, as he describes the selfishness, sin and hypocrisy that are preparing the way for these impending calamities and judgments, his words are swords of truth, but his tones are sobs of grief.

His description of these religious leaders is most discriminating. They sit in Moses' seat and have authority; they make heavy and unnecessary burdens for others, but they do not help to bear them; they make broad their phylacteries, seek the places of honor at feasts and rejoice in their preeminence; they do not enter into the

kingdom of God themselves, and they hinder others; they make foolish distinctions that paralyze the conscience and destroy any real sense of sin; they tithe mint, anise and cummin, while they neglect justice, judgment and mercy; they make clean the outside, but in heart they are unjust and extortioners; they are guilty of manifold sins, but one word describes them, and that one word is "hypocrites!" They were hypocrites, pretending to be what they were not. They were guilty of the great, easily besetting sin of the professors of religion in every age, and this discourse is not recorded as a monument to the infamy of the scribes and Pharisees of that day; running through it all is the warning to beware of the leaven of the scribes and Pharisees which is hypocrisy. The compassion that runs through the whole discourse finds fitting expression in the closing apostrophe to Jerusalem, as Jesus exclaims again, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered her children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! behold your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

The righteous indignation of the great Teacher was tempered by his perfect knowledge of coming judgments and his being in the conscious presence of God. These intense words were freighted with the tenderness and compassion of him who prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

This apostrophe to Jerusalem closes our Lord's public teaching in the temple. The last appeal has been made; the last warning has been given to the leaders of a wicked generation and a doomed city. They do not



know the day of their visitation. The door is shut. The axe, which John the Baptist saw lying at the root of the tree, will soon cut it down. Jesus is about to leave the temple for the last time, and he seems reluctant to go. He yearns for the inhabitants of the Holy City as David yearned for Absalom. He is tired in body and in mind; for it has been a long, trying, sad, distracting day, and he sits down in the court of the women over against the Treasury. In this court are thirteen trumpet shaped chests into which the people are casting their gifts, and, as Jesus sits there, overwhelmed by the thought that it is for the last time, he marks how the rich and the poor cast their beneficent contributions into the Lord's treasury. Here is another opportunity for teaching his disciples and his own people in all ages how God estimates the gifts that are cast into his treasury. He sees the rich giving large gifts out of their abundance, but he sees also a poor widow giving two mites, the very least offering that could be made, and he says to his disciples, "This poor widow cast in more than all they which are casting into the treasury; for they all did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living."

Taking these words in their connection, we see Christian beneficence as God sees it. The incident needs no interpretation and each one can easily apply it. In this nameless widow, with her two mites, and these two mites her whole living, we see the very personification of humble, trustful, self-sacrificing faith and love. Almost ashamed to give because her gift is so small, she is in God's sight a more munificent giver than these haughty, self-complacent rich men who can hardly refrain from regarding her gift with contempt. God's estimate of

Christian giving is very different from that of many a treasurer of a beneficent institution.

As our Lord sat over against the treasury and looked for the last time at the courts of the temple, his Father's house, he was deeply moved. Last things are always solemn things. When one feels that he is looking on any place for the last time, he can hardly suppress sad thoughts. Jesus knew that this was his last visit to the temple, that he was about to die; that the veil of that temple would be rent in twain; that soon the temple would be destroyed. There was something intensely pathetic in the way he looked at everything as he passed out; his emotions and his looks were contagious, for, as they went out of the temple to go over to the Mount of Olives, the disciples began to call his attention to the massive stones and the great buildings. They had perceived his intense interest as he looked at the temple, and they began to look; but they did not see what he saw; they only saw those massive stones, twenty cubits long and ten cubits thick. One of them called his attention to the stones and to the great buildings, but he replied, "Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left here one stone upon another which shall not be thrown down."

Pondering the words of Jesus concerning the destruction of the temple, the disciples followed him out across the black valley of the Kidron and up the slope of the Mount of Olives in the direction of Bethany. The public teaching is completed, and the hour approaches when the Man of Sorrows must pour out his soul unto death, bearing the sins of many. But before he is crucified he must say many things to his own disciples and some of them must be said on the evening of this eventful day; therefore, instead of seeking rest, he sits down with his

disciples on the Mount of Olives, in full view of the temple. The disciples have been walking under the dark shadow of the coming events that he has foretold, and Peter and James and John and Andrew ask him privately when these things shall be and what signs shall precede them. They wished to know what signs should betoken the destruction of the temple, Jesus's second coming, and the end of the world. These three things seemed to them to be mutually related, if not cotemporaneous.

The discourses of Jesus during this evening were a reply to this request, and it was an evening that could never be forgotten. The disciples were tired, troubled, anxious, excited and bewildered. They did not see the events of the next few days as Jesus did, but coming events were casting dark and ominous shadows on everything, and the words of the Master seemed surcharged with a meaning that the disciples could not grasp. No one of the evangelists gives a full report of what Jesus said, and none of them knew the wider meaning of what he himself wrote. Of the three evangelists who report these discourses, only Matthew heard them, for, while John was present, he does not record the events of this evening.

When God reveals the future, he generally reveals it in such a way that his people can only grasp the full meaning of the prophecy when they see the prophecy becoming history. He takes his people to the high mountain of prophetic vision and permits them to look out over things near and remote, but they cannot always see how these near and remote things are related to each other; therefore, objects and events that are in reality very far apart seem to blend into one. We live two thousand years after our Lord delivered these prophetic discourses, and, in the light of the prophecies that have become his-

tory, we may be able to understand the future better than the early disciples did; but we only know in part, and it would be great presumption for any one to do more than try to learn the lessons of duty that lie on the surface. These lessons comprise warnings against being led astray by false Christs, exhortations to be alert and watching for the coming of the Lord, directions to expect and endure sufferings, and the command to pray.

We should not attempt to pry into the secrets that God has reserved even from the angels and from the Son in his humanity; but we may, without irreverence, try to look at these predicted events from the view-point from which Jesus saw them; we may, without irreverence, try to think our Lord's thoughts after him as we read his words; and, in order to do this, we should try to see what he evidently saw as he spake. He was looking across the little valley on the wicked and doomed city over which he had wept; he was looking on the temple that he had recognized as his Father's house and the type of his own body; he saw it polluted and defiled; he saw its divinely appointed forms of worship degraded and corrupted by sensual, compassionless, unbelieving, hypocritical priests; he saw Moses' seat filled by selfish scribes, who made void the law of God; he thought of all that the worship of the temple and the tabernacle had symbolized and typified for fifteen hundred years. He saw also coming events; he saw, near at hand, his own sufferings and death on the cross; he saw the cup of Jerusalem's iniquity full to overflowing; and then he saw in the distance the army of Titus besieging the city; he heard the cry of distress where more than a million perished by famine, fire and sword in the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. To him these nearer events were types and shadows of the more remote and

more grand and awful events that will mark his second Advent and the end of the world, when the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give her light, when the stars shall be falling from heaven, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. This is but the merest hint of the magnificent but awful scenes on which Jesus looked as he talked with his disciples that evening on the Mount of Olives. Past, present and future were gathered into one grand panorama, for they were very near to the *crisis* of this world.

As we stand with the disciples by the side of Jesus on this Mount of prophetic vision, we catch glimpses of what was then the near and remote future. Some of the things Jesus said were for the special instruction of his disciples in their own generation, and some things he said were for those who should come afterwards. When he predicted the destruction of Jerusalem, he gave his early disciples signs that enabled them to take refuge in the little Perea town beyond the Jordan and escape the indescribable horrors of the besieged city. But the great aim of this discourse seems to be the preparation of his people for doing their work in his kingdom in all the ages until his coming in glory at the end of the world, or at the end of the ages. As he spoke to his disciples he saw one day as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day; he spoke of the duty of his people as always present, and of his own coming as always imminent; yet he declared that the time of his coming was the Father's great secret; that he would come when men were as unprepared as they were for the flood in the days when Noah entered into the ark; that his coming would be accompanied with manifestations of great power and heavenly glory. He made the uncertainty as to time an argument for unceasing watchfulness, saying



that if the good man of the house had known when the thief would come, he would have been on his guard, and he added, "Therefore, be ye also ready, for in an hour that ye think not, the Son of man cometh." He pronounced a blessing on the faithful servant whom his Lord should find watching; but, in the strongest terms, proclaimed judgment of condemnation and punishment on the servant who made the seeming delay in his Lord's coming an excuse for usurping authority and oppressing his fellow servants.

After this Jesus enforced and illustrated his direct teaching by the two beautiful and impressive parables of the ten virgins and of the talents.

In the parable of the ten virgins all are waiting for the coming of the bridegroom, but they are waiting in different ways. All have lamps, but only five have oil for their lamps, and the lamps without oil are worthless. All are waiting, but five are waiting without making any real preparation, while the other five have made the necessary provisions. When the bridegroom comes unexpectedly to all, the five who have made due preparation enter with rejoicing as guests at the marriage feast, while the other five, going in search of oil, come too late, when the door is shut, and they are excluded.

The great lesson is plain. The Lord is the Bridegroom. The ten virgins are all by profession his disciples and are waiting for his coming, but only five have made any real preparation. The profession of discipleship is in itself of no more value than a lamp without oil. Preparation for the Lord's coming is to be made before he comes and not at the moment when he comes. The true disciple watches for his Lord's coming, not by seeking to know the time, but by doing the present duty and being always ready. This parable reveals the true

meaning of Christ's command to watch; it teaches that his coming will be the signal to close the door of opportunity, and uncertainty as to time emphasizes the danger of delay in making ready.

The parable of the ten virgins is found only in the gospel by Matthew, and the parable of the talents is reported at length by Matthew only, though Mark refers to it and speaks of one or two things that are not noticed by Matthew.

In this parable a man calls his servants and delivers to them his goods, giving to one five talents, to another two, and to another one, giving to each one according to his ability. The man then goes on a long journey, leaving the servants to take care of his interests. No one is left without his work and his responsibility, and no one is assigned duties that he does not have the ability to perform. To each one is given his work, and even the porter is commanded to watch; but to each one is assigned goods and responsibilities according to his ability. As soon as the man is gone, the servant who has received five talents begins to trade with them and gains five more; and the one who has received the two talents does likewise; but he that received only one talent, takes no risks and makes no effort to increase it; he hides his lord's money in the earth. After a long time the lord of these servants comes and reckons with them, approving and rewarding the first two in the same words, and, condemning the third as a wicked and slothful servant, he takes away his talent and consigns him to outer darkness.

In this parable, as in that of the ten virgins, we may see our Lord and his professed disciples. The man who distributes his goods represents our Lord, and the servants represent his disciples in every age. All the serv-

ants in the parable were represented by the first twelve, for they were men of different talents and one was unfaithful. It seems evident, though, that the parable referred to the future rather than to the then present, since the Lord had not yet gone on his journey. In this parable the professed disciples are not classed as wise and foolish, but as loyal and faithful on the one hand, or rebellious and unfaithful on the other. The loyal, faithful disciple is honestly and cheerfully seeking to do his Lord's work and advance the interests of his cause; the rebellious and unfaithful disciple regards his Lord as a hard master, and is not seeking to advance his interests. One is waiting for his Lord by diligent, cheerful service, while the other is waiting in sullen rebellious inactivity. One is making the best possible use of his opportunities, and he gives his account with joy whether his talents be many or few; another is angry and rebellious because his opportunities were not greater, and his responsibilities less, and he makes his report an accusation against his Lord.

The lesson of the parable is evident. The disciple watches for his coming Lord when he faithfully and cheerfully serves him from day to day. In the parable of the ten virgins the necessity for making due preparation for our Lord's coming was emphasized; and, in this parable, the importance of faithful performance of present duties is emphasized. He watches for his coming Lord who does each day what he is able to do for the cause of his Lord, and for the advancement of his kingdom. To each one the Master assigns his work, and to the faithful servant the time of his Lord's coming is not important, for, when he comes, he will be ready to welcome him and enter into his joy.

Having in these two parables shown how Christians are to wait and watch for their coming Lord, Jesus closed his discourse to his disciples by a most impressive word picture of what will take place when the Son of man comes in his glory, at the end of the world. The disciples have asked when the Son of man will come, and when this world or age will come to an end; our Lord has told them that the time is one of God's secrets; he has exhorted them to wait and watch by faithful, cheerful performance of present duties; and, now he seeks to show them how things will look when the end does come. No words of explanation can add anything to this most impressive picture of what will take place on the Judgment Day. To this great event all are moving forward, and the deeds of each succeeding day are helping to make the weal or woe of that day. To live as the disciples of Christ should live in this world, to watch for his appearing, is to live with reference to this great day, for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

Before leaving the Mount of Olives and entering upon the season of rest and quiet that was to precede the last great act of the divine tragedy, Jesus showed his disciples this one, far-off divine event to which the whole human race is moving, as he said, "But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all the nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and ye

gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in, naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, "Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or athirst, and gave thee drink? And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me.

"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not, sick and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer, saying, Lord when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me. And these shall go away into eternal punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."

This is the Lord's great picture of the judgment day. He who would live as a true disciple must live with reference to this great event. Nevertheless, when we read the reasons for the approval of those on the right hand, and the condemnation of those on the left, we find that deeds of kindness to our fellowmen, done without conscious hope of reward, secure the approval, while failure to do these deeds of kindness to needy fellow-



men incurs condemnation. Had this picture of the judgment been found in the Epistle of James, it might have furnished an additional argument against its being reckoned canonical; but this is the judgment day as Jesus reveals it, and it throws a strong light on the question as to how Christ's disciples should watch and wait for his appearing. Not only is the servant, who makes the delay of his Lord's coming an excuse for abusing his fellow servants, condemned and punished, but the servant, who fails to see and improve his opportunity to minister to Christ by failing to minister to his needy, suffering fellow men will be condemned. On the other hand, he who, in love, ministers to his needy fellow man will find that he has been ministering to Christ, and will be rewarded accordingly.

This vision of judgment was the sublime and impressive close of the last great day of our Lord's public ministry. It lifts the believer above the present and the temporal and throws the search light of infinite wisdom on the realities of the eternal years. It reveals the infinite littleness of man's judgment and the infinite majesty of God's judgment.

## LVIII

### WEDNESDAY OF PASSION WEEK

Matthew 26: 1-2. "And it came to pass when Jesus had finished all these words, he said unto his disciples, Ye know that after two days the passover cometh, and the Son of man is delivered up to be crucified."

(Matthew 26: 1-6; Mark 14: 1-2; Luke 22: 1; John 12: 36.)

**A**T the close of his discourse to his disciples on the Mount of Olives on Tuesday evening, Jesus said, "Ye know that after two days the passover cometh, and the Son of man is delivered up to be crucified." Then he disappeared and we have no information of where he went or what he did until Thursday afternoon. The general impression that he spent the intervening time at the home of his friends in Bethany is not consistent with John's statement, "He hid himself from them." Had his enemies known where to find him apart from the multitude he would probably have been arrested before Thursday night. On the other hand he was not hiding from them in any such way as to indicate that he thought the storm of rage might abate and that he might escape crucifixion. He knew perfectly that his hour was at hand and wherever he was he was girding himself for the last act in the great tragedy. Our desire to know where and how this intervening time was spent would not warrant us in seeking to discover secrets that God has not seen fit to reveal. We can only listen to the eloquent, impressive silence that succeeds his words, "The Son of man is delivered up to be crucified."

All the information we have concerning the movements of Christ's enemies during this time is contained in the statement that the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of Caiaphas, and that they decided to take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him, but, not during the feast, lest a tumult might arise amongst the people. This statement indicates that, while Jesus was saying to his disciples, "Ye know that after two days the passover cometh, and the Son of man is delivered up to be killed," his enemies had decided to not kill him until after the feast, because they feared the people. We have no information as to why the plan of Christ's enemies was changed. Their meeting in the palace of the high priest was probably on Tuesday night, after Jesus had rebuked them in the temple. At that meeting the fear of a tumult constrained the rulers to make no move until after the feast, though Judas had already arranged with them for the betrayal of his Master. It is possible that, after this meeting in the palace, Judas suggested to them the time and place of betrayal, and they concluded to do at night what they had feared might cause a tumult if it were attempted when Jesus was teaching in the temple.

The following seems a satisfactory method of harmonizing the different accounts of the betrayal. On the evening, after the Sabbath spent in Bethany, Judas, enraged by what he termed the "waste" of precious ointment in anointing Jesus at the feast in the house of Simon, the leper, decided to betray his Master, and went that night to make his first bargain with Christ's enemies. The thought was suggested by Satan; but the appeal was only successful through the covetousness of Judas. No direct action was taken until Tuesday evening when Judas again sought his fellow conspirators after the

meeting in the palace of Caiaphas. He found them mad with rage because of Christ's open rebuke, and because he had interfered with their sacrilegious gains when he cleansed the temple, but they were afraid of the multitude until Judas suggested some such plan as was afterwards carried out. After our Lord and his disciples had observed the feast of passover, and Judas knew he would go to the garden of Gethsemane, he again sought the leaders of the Jews and led the soldiers out of the city to make the arrest. This order of events harmonizes all the different accounts without doing violence to any of them.

We cannot read the different accounts of these events without perceiving that the real contest was between the Prince of Peace and the prince of this world. Satan was using bad men, blinded by covetousness, pride and passion. He had the definite and malignant purpose to destroy Jesus. Jesus recognized his real enemy, for he said, "The prince of this world cometh."

Jesus knew, too, that his enemy was over-reaching himself, and that he was about to be cast out. He saw the real crisis and knew its meaning, and could pray for his deluded human enemies, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." To leave Satan out, and seek to explain these events as merely the plans of bad men, is to leave out a most important part of the inspired records. While Jesus was preparing himself for that great event for which he became incarnate, the prince of this world was organizing his forces, and Judas and the Jewish rulers were his wicked and deluded instruments.

## LIX

### THE LAST PASSOVER

Luke 22: 15. "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer."

(Matthew 26: 17-35; Mark 14: 12-31; Luke 22: 7-38; John 13: 1-17: 26.)

WHEN Pharaoh's power was to be broken and his Hebrew slaves were to go forth out of Egypt as the Lord's freemen, God instituted the passover. It was observed afterwards as a memorial of Israel's deliverance from Egyptian oppression; but it was prophetic as well as commemorative. The slaying of the lamb, the sprinkling of the blood, and the promise of God, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you," pointed forward to the death of the true Paschal Lamb and a greater deliverance from a worse than Egyptian bondage. Christ is the great center of Biblical revelation, and the whole history of Israel's deliverance and journey to the promised land can only be understood and appreciated as it is seen from the view point of Christ's person and work. He was a prophet like unto Moses, the deliverer greater than Moses, who contended with and broke the power of a greater and worse oppressor than Pharaoh. The passover, instituted in Egypt, was a type and prophecy of the death of Christ, the true Paschal Lamb. It had been observed by the Jews with more or less regularity for about fifteen hundred years; it had accomplished its



typical and prophetic purposes and was to be superseded by the memorial of a greater event.

Whether Jesus and his disciples observed the passover on the 13th Nisan, or at the ordinary time of observing it, is a mooted question. Farrar says, "There are ample reasons for believing" that the passover observed by Christ and his disciples "was not the ordinary Jewish passover." On the other hand, the different narratives of the evangelists seem to most students irreconcilable with this theory.

On Thursday the disciples asked Jesus where they should prepare for observing the passover. It would have been possible for them to observe it at Bethany, and they may have hoped that their Master would decide to do so, and thus escape the danger of going into the city. Jesus answered their inquiries, however, in such a way as to prevent any possible protest or plea on account of danger. He bade two of them go into the city, saying, "There shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water; follow him, and wheresoever he shall enter in, say to the good man of the house, the Master saith, Where is my guest chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready; there make ready for us." The two disciples did as they were commanded and they found everything just as Jesus had said.

For reasons that we need not stop to enumerate, it has been thought by many that this large upper room was in the home of Mark's father, and that the young man who afterwards escaped arrest by leaving his garment was Mark. It is believed, too, by many that it was in this room that the risen Lord first met his disciples, and that they were assembled here when the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost.

This upper room was supplied with the things necessary for observing the passover, and it would only be necessary for the two disciples to go out and purchase the lamb, have it approved by the priests, slay it according to the requirements of the Jewish law, and prepare it for the paschal supper. It is probable also that Judas may have purchased the lamb and had it approved, so that the two disciples would only have to slay it in the court of the temple, and then bring it to the upper room and prepare it for food.

Of our Lord's last journey over the Mount of Olives into the city nothing is known, but, when the time had arrived for observing the passover, he and the twelve were assembled in that large upper room, and "he sat down and the apostles with him."

While four evangelists give brief accounts of this important and most impressive event, no one gives a complete account of all that occurred. It is probable that the first thing that occurred after taking their positions at the table was the declaration of Jesus, recorded by Luke, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." John refers to the same event when he says, "Jesus, knowing that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." These two statements indicate the thoughts that pervaded the mind of the Master and of his disciples during the hours that had passed since he had talked with them on the Mount of Olives. He was looking forward to his own sufferings and death. His love for his disciples assumed a greater solicitude and new tenderness as he thought of leaving them. He was perfectly human as well as divine, and he looked at them as a good man, about to die, looks into the faces of those

whom he dearly loves. "Having loved his own, he loved them to the end."

There was something in the intense and ominous mental and moral atmosphere of that memorable evening that developed the worst traits of the disciples. They were suspicious and ready to be envious of each other. They recognized a great crisis in their affairs. They were nervous, excited, irritable and depressed by the oft repeated assurance that their Master would be taken from them and put to death. Instead of seeking to support and sustain him by their sympathy, they were thinking about themselves and preparing to fight for a share of the inheritance. The prince of this world was there and was putting his thoughts into other hearts than that of Judas. He was not only making his plans for sifting Peter, and using him as an instrument to break the heart of his Master ; he was tempting the other disciples and filling their hearts with the most unworthy and unbecoming thoughts. While the Master was looking upon them with intense love and desiring to eat this passover with them before he suffered, they were contending who should be the greatest.

The contention of the disciples probably manifested itself in their contest for the place of honor at the table and in their evident unwillingness to perform any service for each other that might seem to be a recognition of the superiority of the other. With wondrous, condescending patience Jesus gave them a most striking and never to be forgotten object lesson. Rising from the table he girded himself with a towel and proceeded to wash their feet.

This was recognized by all as the work of a servant, and the impression made on the disciples is indicated by the minuteness with which John records it. He marks

every act and the thoughts lying back of the act, as he writes, "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came forth from God and goeth unto God, riseth from supper, and layeth aside his garments, and he took a towel, and girded himself. Then he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded." It was a deeply impressive scene, and contained a great lesson in humility, revealing the true standard of greatness in Christ's kingdom. The disciples had been contending who should be the greatest and Jesus showed them *how* to be greatest. No doubt every disciple felt humbled and ashamed when it dawned upon him that his Lord was about to perform this menial service, and each one felt what Peter expressed.

It is probable that in their positions at the table the Master came first to Peter. When Peter said, "Lord dost thou wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "What I do thou knowest not now, but shalt understand hereafter." Peter said, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Then Jesus replied, "If I wash thee not thou hast no part in me." To this Peter responded, "Lord, not my feet only, but my hands and my head."

The conversation between Jesus and Peter does not indicate that there is anything more in this washing of the feet than in the washing of hands as a ceremonial. It was customary to have this office performed by servants. In this act Jesus gave a great lesson in humility and the dignity of real service.

If the disciples failed to grasp the character of the Master's action, they were enlightened by their Master as he said, on resuming his place at the table, "If I then, the Lord and the Master, have washed your feet, ye

ought also to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you." Probably in the same connection he contrasted his Kingdom and Lordship with world kingdoms, saying, "The kings of the gentiles have lordship over them; and they that have authority over them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so; but he that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger; and he that is chief as he that doth serve."

In immediate connection with his record of Christ's washing the disciple's feet, John tells of his reference to Judas as the traitor. All the evangelists mention this incident, and their accounts supplement each other; but John gives the fullest account and introduces it by recognizing it as the fulfillment of a prophecy found in the 41st Psalm, saying, "I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth my bread lifted up his heel against me." John tells of the profound and manifest sorrow of Jesus as he spake of his betrayer; Matthew records the horror and sorrow of the disciples, as each one said, "Is it I?" John gives a more detailed account of the discovery of the traitor and the motives that led him to betray his Master. Speaking of himself in his usual way, John says, "There was at the table reclining in Jesus' bosom one of his disciples whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoneth to him, and saith unto him, Tell us who it is of whom he speaketh. He leaning back, as he was, on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it? Jesus therefore answereth, He it is for whom I shall dip the sop, and give it him! So when he had dipped the sop he taketh it and giveth it to Judas the son of Simon Iscariot. And after the sop, then entered Satan into



him. Jesus therefore saith unto him, That thou doest, do quickly."

All this was said and done in such a way that the other disciples except Peter did not comprehend the meaning of our Lord's words to Judas. Some of them thought that he was directing Judas to purchase the supplies for the feast. Our Lord and the traitor knew each other. Judas knew that the Master was looking down into his sinful heart, and that the dreadful crime that he was cherishing and planning was not a secret. He heard the last warning as our Lord said, "Woe unto that man through whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had not been born." He could no longer endure the presence of his Master. "Having received the sop, he went out straightway; and it was night." How significant these last words! It was midnight darkness within the sordid, treacherous soul of Judas Iscariot.

Whether Judas went out before the institution of the Lord's Supper is a matter of doubt, but we assume that he did. It hardly seems possible that he should have joined in the observance of that touching and beautiful memorial that was to take the place of the passover, and has come down through the centuries confirming the faith and inflaming the love of Christians in all lands. Matthew, Mark and Luke give accounts of the institution of this sacrament, and the apostle Paul declares that he received it of the Lord. The narratives of the three evangelists differ in such a way as to indicate that they were written independently, but there is neither contradiction nor irreconcilable conflict. The apostle Paul gathers into one brief statement the essence of all these narratives when he says, "The Lord Jesus, on the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when

he had given thanks, he brake it and said, Take, eat; This is my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me."

The bread and wine were used in the observance as the symbols to represent the body and blood of Christ. The sacrament was declared to be a memorial of Christ's death, and it was to be observed by his disciples until his second coming, for Jesus said "This do in remembrance of me," and Paul said, "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come."

When one reads the narratives of the four evangelists as they tell what took place that night, and tries to harmonize them, it seems probable that our Lord's warning to Peter was given while they were at the table, after the institution of the Lord's Supper. Judas had gone out to complete his crime, and Jesus spake with peculiar tenderness to the eleven, saying, "Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified, in him; and God shall glorify him in himself and straitway he shall glorify him. Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me; and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so say I unto you now, A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

In view of what had already been said, the disciples could hardly fail to understand our Lord's words about going away. They knew that he referred to his approaching death. Yet Simon said, "Lord, whither goest

thou?" and, when Jesus answered, "Whither I go thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards," Peter replied, "Why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thee."

In all this Peter was most sincere, as well as self confident, but he did not know himself as well as his Lord knew him. Jesus knew, not only what had been written about the smitten shepherd and the scattered sheep; he knew also Satan's purpose to sift this enthusiastic but fickle disciple, and he said, first, "All ye shall be offended in me this night." Peter protested that he would stand with him even if all others should prove unfaithful, but Jesus said, "This night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice."

If to be forewarned is to be forearmed, Peter could certainly have girded himself for the battle, and no doubt he thought he was doing so when he declared with vehemence, "If I must die with thee, I will not deny thee." He did not yet understand that he was not contending against flesh and blood, but against supernatural powers. He did not know that only his Master's prayer in his behalf would save him from an absolute wreck of faith. He was destined to learn by sad experience the great lesson that would make him able to confirm the faith of his brethren.

In Jesus' formal discourse and intercessory prayer in that room the night before his death his divine compassion and human sympathy and affection were fully revealed. The time, the place and all the attendant circumstances were adapted to help the eleven disciples to know their Master more perfectly than they had ever known him. He had talked with them many times, but this was the last time during his mortal life. He had often prayed for them when he was alone with the Fa-

ther, but now they hear him pray for them, as he communes with the Father in their presence. It was a night that these disciples could never forget.

The evangelist John, aided and guided by the Holy Spirit, has put on record the incidents and discourses in that upper room for the benefit of those who should afterwards become disciples. These words of the Master are needed in every age and are adapted to the wants of every generation. If we wish to read the record of these events in such a way as to comprehend and appreciate their full meaning, we must seek first of all, the help of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter that is promised. We must, at the same time, use all the recorded facts, as we try to attain to a full realization of the circumstances in which the Master's words were first spoken.

That guest chamber in Jerusalem is for the believer the Holy of Holies. In it the Master had observed the passover supper with his disciples. Their minds had gone backward to that night in Egypt when the angel of death, seeing the blood on lintel and door post, passed over the homes of God's people. The passover service was solemn and impressive. More solemn and more impressive still was the institution of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper that was to take the place of the passover. As the disciples observed the sacred ordinance, they had visible, tangible symbols of their Lord's death. They did not know that night all that the symbols meant, but they learned afterwards, and all disciples now know that Jesus, in that upper room, as he gave the bread and wine to his disciples, was symbolizing his own death on the cross. The words spoken in such circumstances and at such a time, cannot fail to touch the believer's heart. The words themselves, as they are recorded by the

Spirit of God for the Christian church, are so tender, so comprehensive, so full of meaning that nothing can be either added or eliminated.

In the first part of the discourse our Lord lifts the veil of the future and permits us to look into the Father's house. What other words have ever sent such floods of light through clouds of sorrow bringing comfort to broken hearts as the words of Jesus, when he said, "Let not your hearts be troubled?" When our dearly beloved friends are taken from us, how we long to speak to them and have them speak to us! How we wish to see them and know their joys! We cannot speak to them directly, nor can we get a message directly from them. We cannot even see them as we saw them when they were with us on this earth. Yet, to the eyes of faith, the words of Jesus throw open the doors of the Father's house, and we do see their happiness in the place that he has prepared for them. How we long to know the mystery of death! to know just what death means! Jesus answers that longing, as he says, "I will come again and will receive you unto myself that where I am there ye may be also." When our dear ones go from our side Jesus has fulfilled this promise to them, and they are with him beholding his glory and sharing his joy. Does the lonely heart cry out, "O that the dear one might be with me!" "O that I should not be compelled to journey through life alone!" Even this desire is granted if we walk by faith. The dear ones are not far away, only in another room in the Father's house. We remain in the room that is fitted and adapted to the wants of our material, terrestrial bodies; the dear departed are in the room that is adapted to their spiritual, celestial bodies. The communion with them is not direct and material, but, while it is indirect, it is still real.



They are with Jesus and with the Father, but Jesus has promised that the Father and the Son will be with us in the person of the Holy Spirit. Our departed friends are with the Father and the Father is with us. They are not in some far distant land, but with us, because they are with Christ, and he is with his disciples. If our friends could see us so as to speak to us directly they might be anxious about our welfare, but they know that God is caring for all his own people in this world, even as he cares for those whom he has called to the heavenly home. Perfect in holiness, they have perfect trust and perfect joy in God. They are with us as we work for the Master. To all true disciples in all ages as well as to the eleven, Jesus says, "Let not your hearts be troubled. In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you. I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am there ye may be also."

While we remain in this world and do our Lord's work our union with him is as perfect as the union of the living branch with the living vine from which it draws its life. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life, and we are in him. He is the Vine and we are the branches.

We have not aimed at any analysis of our Lord's words, but have tried to aid our readers in attaining to a consciousness of the real atmosphere and environment of that guest chamber while they read the inspired record of Jesus' words the night before his death, John 14: 1-17; 16.

"Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a

place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go, ye know the way. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also; from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I say unto you I speak not from myself; but the Father abiding in me doeth his works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works' sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask me anything in my name, that will I do. If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him; ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you desolate: I come unto you. Yet a little while, and the world beholdeth me no more; but ye behold me; because I live, ye shall live also. In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my

commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him. Judas (not Iscariot) saith unto him, Lord, what is come to pass that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my words: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me.

"These things have I spoken unto you, while yet abiding with you. But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful. Ye heard how I said to you, I go away, and I come unto you. If ye loved me, ye would have rejoiced, because I go unto the Father: for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe. I will no more speak much with you, for the prince of the world cometh: and he hath nothing in me; but that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit. Already ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye ex-

cept ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches; He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit, for apart from me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; and so shall ye be my disciples. Even as the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you; abide ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be fulfilled. This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you. No longer do I call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I heard from my Father I have made known unto you. Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye may love one another. If the world hateth you, ye know that it hath hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because we are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you. A servant is not greater than his lord. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute

you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works, which none other did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word may be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause. But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me: and ye also bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

“These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be made to stumble. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service unto God. And these things will they do, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things have I spoken unto you, that when their hour is come, ye may remember them, how that I told you. And these things I said not unto you from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I go unto him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have spoken these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you. And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not



on me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot hear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth, for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak; and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you. All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he taketh of mine, and shall declare it unto you. A little while, and ye behold me no more; and again a little while, and ye shall see me. Some of his disciples therefore said one to another, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye behold me not, and again a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? We know not what he saith. Jesus perceived that they were desirous to ask him, and he said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves concerning this, that I said, A little while, and ye behold me not, and again a little while, and ye shall see me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but when she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish for the joy that a man is born into the world. And ye therefore now have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one taketh away from you. And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, if ye shall ask anything of the Father, he will give it

you in my name. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be fulfilled.

“These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: the hour cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but shall tell you plainly of the Father. In that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came forth from the Father. I came out from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father. His disciples say, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now know we that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou comest forth from God. Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? Behold the hour cometh, yea, is come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

“These things spake Jesus; and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee: even as thou gavest him authority over all flesh, that whatsoever thou hast given him, to them he should give eternal life. And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ. I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I mani-

festest thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them to me; and they have kept thy word. Now they know that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are from thee: for the words which thou gavest me I have given unto them; and they received them, and knew of a truth that I came forth from thee, and they believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me; for they are thine: and all things that are mine are thine, and thine are mine: and I am glorified in them. And I am no more in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are. While I was with them, I kept them in thy name which thou hast given me: and I guarded them, and not one of them perished, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hated them, because they are not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them from the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth. As thou didst send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me. And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them; that they

may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that thou didst send me, and lovedst them, even as thou lovedst me. Father, I desire that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world knew thee not, but I knew thee; and these knew that thou didst send me; and I made known unto them thy name, and will make it known; that the love wherewith thou lovedst me may be in them, and I in them."

Had the eleven disciples known, as they talked with the Master and listened to his great intercessory prayer in that upper room, what would take place the next day, they would have certainly felt that they were in the Holy of Holies. On the mount of transfiguration Peter had said "It is good for us to be here," but in that upper room the thoughts of every heart were too deep for words. "Having loved his own he loved them to the end," and revealed his love by talking with them and praying for them.

## LX

### THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN

John 18:1. "When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Kidron, where was a garden into the which he entered himself with his disciples."

WITH bowed head and sorrowful heart, Jesus led his eleven disciples from the guest chamber in Jerusalem out across the Kidron to Gethsemane. As we read the inspired records of what took place that night, we know what is meant when it is said that the Captain of our Salvation should be "made perfect through suffering." No disciple will ever be called upon to pray with greater intensity of desire and, at the same time, say in more humble submission, "thy will be done." Who but the perfectly pure and sensitive Son of man can estimate the bitterness of that cup as it was prepared by the combined actions of Jesus' friends and his enemies, and as it may be seen from the human side. To be betrayed by one who had been for three years in the circle of his friends and followers; to be denied publicly by one who had made the most vehement protestations of friendship; to be forsaken by all those who claimed to be his nearest friends, just when he seemed to most need sympathy, was it not enough to break that great, generous, loving heart? Who has ever faced such consummate and universal unfaithfulness and ingratitude? When the friends we have loved and trusted betray, repudiate and forsake us in our time of need, we



can always see some act of our own that was inconsistent and unworthy perfect fidelity; but there was no such excuse for the unfaithfulness of Christ's disciples. He had been so pure, so true, so loving; and, now, when the powers of darkness have mustered all their forces for his destruction, his own disciples add the poison of unfaithfulness and treachery to the bitter cup. Is it any wonder that he should pray thrice, and in such agony, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me"? Was it not enough that his Jewish enemies should revile, persecute and abuse him? Was it not enough that Roman soldiers should drive nails into his hands and his feet and then lift him up to die on the cross? Must he suffer also the worst of all wounds, the wounds made by ingratitude, until he should cry out,

"For it was not an enemy that reproached me,  
Then could I have borne it?"

Yes, he must drink this bitter cup in order that being made perfect through suffering he might be able to help others who would afterwards be called on to suffer in this way. If any Christian disciple feels overwhelmed by the ingratitude and unfaithfulness of his friends, he needs to go with Jesus into Gethsemane and look at the bitter cup from which his Lord shrank with horror, and then accepted. Jesus saw in that cup all the hatred and malice of enemies, all the physical pain and mortal agony of crucifixion, all the unfaithfulness and ingratitude of friends. He trod the winepress alone.

But there was also in that cup the awful darkness that overwhelmed his soul and constrained him to cry out on the cross, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" This agony of the Son of God we cannot measure. The mystery of suffering as expiation of the sins of an-

other is a divine mystery; we only know that he bore our sins in his own body on the tree; we only know that he was made a sin-offering for us, and that the forsaking of the Father was the one crushing blow that led him to cry out in agony on the cross. It is possible that ordinary men may have a hint as to the quality of this suffering when, after they have been deserted and persecuted by men, they begin to feel that God also has turned against them.

When our Lord was preparing himself to endure all this agony, he felt the need of human sympathy. He would be alone, but would have his friends near him, and, when he came to Gethsemane, he said to his disciples, "Sit ye here, while I go yonder and pray." He went farther into the garden, taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be "sorrowful and sore troubled." Then saith he unto them, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death, abide ye here and watch with me. And he went forward a little and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

After offering this prayer, Jesus came to the three disciples and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again, a second time, he went and prayed saying, "My Father, if this cannot pass away, except I drink it, thy will be done," and he came again and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. And he left them again and went away and prayed the third time, using the same words. As he offered this prayer "his sweat became as it were great drops of blood."

After praying the third time, Jesus came to his disciples and said, "Sleep on now, and take your rest; behold the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed unto the hands of sinners. Arise, let us be going; behold, he is at hand that betrayeth me."

No words of man can add pathos to the inspired record of our Lord's lonely agony when at midnight in the garden on Olive's brow he prayed alone.

"Go to dark Gethsemane,  
Ye that feel the tempter's power;  
Your Redeemer's conflict see;  
Watch with him one bitter hour;  
Turn not from his griefs away;  
Learn of Jesus Christ to pray."

## LXI

### THE ARREST

John 18: 12-13. "So the band and the chief captain, and the officers of the Jews, seized Jesus and bound him, and led him to Annas first; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, who was high priest that year."

(Matthew 26: 47-56; Mark 14: 43-52; Luke 22: 47-53; John 18: 2-14.)

**T**HE fortress of Antonia was near the temple, and was garrisoned with Roman soldiers; but, during the feast of the passover, the temple itself was guarded by a cohort of from four hundred to six hundred soldiers. Christ's triumphant entrance into Jerusalem on the first day of the week, the discussions in the temple, and the intense feeling manifested by all classes, as they talked about the Galilean prophet, would be observed by the Roman officers who were responsible for the peace of the city. The temple cohort would not be less than six hundred men, and their commander would be unusually vigilant.

We have no detailed account of the movements of Judas after he went out from the guest chamber where Jesus and his disciples kept the passover; but we know that he went to the chief priests and Pharisees, with whom he had already arranged for the betrayal; and, together, they planned and executed the arrest of Jesus. First, they secured a cohort of Roman soldiers. The actual number of soldiers is not known, but there is good reason for believing that, while the whole cohort would not leave the

temple, the detachment may have numbered two or three hundred men. There seemed to be danger of an insurrection, and Judas would not fail to impress his fellow conspirators with the possibility of resistance. Application would be made to the captain of the temple cohort, and it is possible that he consulted Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, before the soldiers were sent.

Whether it was the original plan of Judas to betray his Master in the garden or in the upper room is uncertain, but there seems to be good reason for believing that the first plan was to make the arrest before Jesus left the city. If the young man who fled leaving the linen cloak was Mark, as many suppose, and, if the passover was eaten in his father's house, it would indicate that the cohort of soldiers went first to the place where Jesus had observed the passover. So much time had been spent in perfecting the arrangements that Jesus and his disciples had left the city, but Judas knew his Master's chosen resort in the garden on Olivet, and he led the band of soldiers with officers from the chief priests and Pharisees out across the Kidron. It was a large company, and there was no attempt at concealment, for they carried lanterns and torches.

Judas had given his co-conspirators a token by which they should know Jesus; and, as if to add all possible infamy to his treachery, the token chosen was a kiss, saying, "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he; take him and lead him away safely." It is probable that Judas walked some distance in advance of the band of soldiers, so that he would not appear to be with them or leading them.

Jesus had come from the place where he had prayed that this cup might pass away from him. Only a little time before he had sweat as it were great drops of blood, and his soul had seemed overwhelmed; but he met the



traitor with more than royal dignity. He knew perfectly what it all meant when Judas repeatedly kissed him, but he only said, "Friend, do that for which thou art come," and then added, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" Then, leaving the traitor to his own thoughts, Jesus went forward, and spoke to the leaders of the cohort, saying, "Whom seek ye?" They had not expected any such greeting. They had been given a sign by which they would know him if he sought to escape, or if his disciples should attempt to resist his arrest, but, when the sign was given, instead of rushing upon him, they hesitated until he came forward and inquired their errand. They were not prepared for any such reception and could only reply that they sought Jesus of Nazareth. To this Jesus replied with quiet dignity. "I am he."

In the original the reply consisted of only two short words, "I am," yet those two words, spoken by the Christ, caused this large band of Roman soldiers, and these Jewish officers to retreat and fall to the ground. No other movement was made to arrest this King of men until he said again to them, "Whom seek ye?" and they replied, "Jesus of Nazareth." Then, knowing that his hour had come when he must drink the bitter cup that he had accepted in order to save his people, he concealed the awe-inspiring power of his divine personality. The omnipotence in that voice that could still winds and waves, the omnipotence in that voice that could heal disease and raise the dead, the omnipotence in that voice that could awe men and demons was now concealed, and Jesus said, "I told you that I am he; if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way."

When the soldiers and the crowd regained their confidence and came forward to make the arrest, Simon Peter drew his sword and cut off the right ear of a servant of

the high priest named Malchus. But the same voice, that had awed his enemies, restrained his friends, as Jesus said to Peter, "Put up the sword into the sheath. The cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" "Or thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father and he shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels? How then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"

Then turning to Malchus Jesus said, "Suffer ye them thus far." And he touched his ear and healed him.

Jesus had restrained all resistance to his arrest, and had willingly surrendered when he could have escaped; but, when they seized him and bound him, he resented the indignity, saying, "Are ye come out, as against a robber, with swords and staves to seize me? I was daily with you in the temple teaching and ye took me not, but this is done that the Scriptures might be fulfilled." "This is your hour, and the power of darkness."

When the disciples saw their Master seized and bound, they were panic stricken and fled. One young man—not one of the eleven, possibly Lazarus, more probably Mark, clad only in a linen cloth, dared to follow Jesus, but when an attempt was made to seize him, he also fled, leaving the linen cloth, and leaving Jesus alone in the hands of his enemies. If Jesus had trusted in men, he would have been crushed by this wholesale desertion. For three years, by precept and by example, he had sought to train these men in true manhood, and yet they exhibited the grossest cowardice. Were these disciples hypocrites, or were they more cowardly than the average man? No. They were only men, and this was the hour and the power of darkness. The prince of this world was there.

## LXII

### BEFORE THE HIGH PRIESTS AND THE SANHEDRIN

Mark 14: 53. "And they led Jesus away to the high priest."  
(Matthew 26: 57-75; Mark 14: 53-72; Luke 22: 63-71; John  
18: 12-27.)

**T**HE four evangelists give very brief sketches of our Lord's trial and condemnation by the Jewish rulers; and, in order to harmonize these accounts, we need to bear in mind that the term high priest was applied, not only to the actual incumbent of the office, but to any one who had been high priest and was still living. Annas, son of Seth, was appointed high priest by the legate Quirinius, A. D. 6, and was deposed by Valerius Gratus A. D. 15. It is said that each of the five sons of Annas also held the office of high priest, and Caiaphas, the incumbent of the office when our Lord was condemned, was Annas' son-in-law. The family of Annas were Sadducean aristocrats, having immense wealth derived, in part at least, from the "booths of the sons of Annas," or the traffic in the temple, which monopolized the sale of all kinds of materials for sacrifice. They were responsible for making God's house "a den of robbers." They made their religious professions a means of acquiring worldly wealth, and were as cold, hard and compassionless as the Pharisees, without having the religious convictions of the Pharisees. They were worldly-wise, politic, unscrupulous, heartless rich men. With them the

difference between right and wrong was merely the difference between the expedient and the inexpedient. The question whether any one should be condemned to death, was not a question whether the man merited condemnation, but was simply a question of expediency. If it would be to the advantage of the nation or of the high priest's family, by their ethical code, he ought to be condemned.

When Jesus was arrested he was brought directly to Annas. Edersheim says, "We know absolutely nothing of what passed in the house of Annas.....except that Annas sent Jesus bound to Caiaphas." This statement seems to conflict with the narrative in John 18:19-24, and we feel compelled to believe that Annas asked Jesus of his disciples and his teachings and that it was in the presence of Annas that an officer struck Jesus. It may be said that Annas had no authority, but a man like Annas did not hesitate to usurp authority, and his authority, rightful or usurped, is recognized in the record that he sent Jesus bound to Caiaphas. It is possible that Annas and Caiaphas may have occupied the same or adjoining palaces, and that both may have been present at the informal examination of Jesus; but it seems most consistent with all the narratives to infer that the first examination, described by John, took place in the presence of Annas.

The high priest first asked Jesus of his disciples and his teachings. This was probably done in order to get evidence that could be used in the more formal trial before the council or sanhedrin. To these questions Jesus replied, "I have spoken openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogues, and in the temple, where all the Jews came together, and in secret I have done nothing. Why askest thou me? Ask them that have heard me, what I

spake unto them; behold, these know the things which I have said." For this reasonable, respectful answer one of the officers, no doubt a minion of the high priest, struck Jesus with his hand. For this indignity the high priest was as responsible as if he had struck the blow himself. For such an act Paul administered a most scathing rebuke to another high priest, but the meek and lowly Jesus only said, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but, if well, why smitest thou me?"

Who shall say how this act was recorded in heaven for final appeal to the just Judge of all the earth before whom Annas has been summoned? How did the heavenly Father regard this act? Annas the cunning, conscienceless Sadducee, seventy years old, but not venerable, seized his opportunity to insult and abuse the Galilean prophet who had interfered with his sacrilegious traffic in the temple.

Up to this point, the Pharisees had been in the lead as persecutors of Jesus; but, now, the whole wicked business passes into the hands of irreligious, time-serving, avaricious priests, and, of all these, Annas was probably the oldest and wickedest.

It was after midnight when Jesus was arrested, and the informal examination by the high priest took place while messengers were sent out to bring a quorum of the sanhedrin or of a section of it for the formal trial. It would require considerable time to assemble and organize the Jewish council, and it was probably during that time that Peter denied his Lord.

Peter and John had followed their captive Master, and, having come to the door of the high priest's house, were standing without, when John, who knew the high priest, went out and brought Peter into the court. As he came in at the door, or as he was seated by the fire that had



been kindled in the court, the maid who kept the door said, "Art thou also one of this man's disciples?" and Peter said, "I am not." Not long afterwards, on the porch, another maid saw him and said, "Thou art also one of them," but Peter denied, saying, "I am not." An hour elapsed, and Peter had returned to the court, where Jesus could see him and hear his words, when he was again charged with being a disciple, and he began to curse and to swear, saying, "I know not this man of whom ye speak." Immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew, and the Lord turned and looked upon Peter, and Peter went out and wept bitterly. He had been tried and had fallen. What had seemed impossible had come to pass. Thrice, and with vehemence, he had denied his Lord.

When Jesus was brought before the council the chief priests and whole council sought false witnesses against him in order to put him to death, but their witnesses did not agree until two were found who testified that they had heard him say, "I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands." This was not exactly what our Lord had said about destroying the temple. He had said, after his first cleansing of the temple, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19), and he had spoken of the temple of his body. But the testimony of these witnesses made its impression, for on the cross his enemies cried in derision, "Thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save thyself."

The high priest knew that he needed other evidence before the council could demand authority from the governor to put Jesus to death; and, standing up, he sought for evidence from Jesus himself, saying, "Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee?" When Jesus still held his peace, the high priest said, "I

adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God." To this adjuration Jesus gave an answer that brought the trial to a speedy conclusion. First, he said, "I am," and then he added, "Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." He had listened in silence to the testimony of false witnesses against himself, but, when the high priest inquires whether he is the Christ, the Son of God, the silence is broken, though he knows that his answer will secure his condemnation. His disciple had denied him, but he will not deny nor conceal himself. In the presence of the council, facing death, Jesus proclaims himself the Christ, the Son of the living God, and foretells his coming glory.

The high priest then played his part as a sanctimonious hypocrite. Unlike the Pharisees, he had no horror of blasphemy, but when it suited his purpose, he rent his garments, and, with pretense of holy horror, exclaimed, "He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses?" This man had come to the judgment seat determined to condemn the prisoner. He had on a former occasion used words capable of expressing a deeper meaning than he had ever dreamed of, when he had said, "It is expedient that one man die for the people," and, now, forgetting his law of expediency, on the charge of blasphemy, he would put that one man to death. Whether every man in the council regarded our Lord's words as blasphemy we are not told. No one was found who would speak a word in behalf of this betrayed, deserted, denied prisoner; no one would withstand the judgment of this rich, unscrupulous, Sadducean high priest; and so the whole council echoed, "blasphemy!"

Then were the flood gates of reviling and abuse thrown open. They spat in Jesus' face and buffeted him; and,

blindfolding him, they smote him, saying, "Prophecy; who is he that struck thee?" Condemned for blasphemy by this Jewish court, avarice, envy, malice, cruelty, hatred and every other evil instinct and passion of degraded sin-cursed humanity threw off all restraint and joined their forces to revile and abuse the perfect Son of man and the divine Son of God. The powers of earth and of hell had combined against the Lord's anointed. The Messiah had come unto his own people and they had rejected him and proclaimed him a blasphemer because he claimed to be the Son of God. Sanctimonious Pharisees, cold, calculating, heartless Sadducean money lovers, and fickle, servile underlings united all their evil powers to insult, torture and crush the Son of man. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and he was made perfect through suffering.

## LXIII

### BEFORE PILATE

Luke 23: 1. "And the whole company of them rose up, and brought him before Pilate."

(Matthew 27: 1-26; Mark 15: 1-15; Luke 23: 1-21; John 18: 28-19: 16.)

**W**HEN Jesus was convicted of blasphemy by the Jewish sanhedrin he would have been stoned to death if the Jews had been a free people; for death by stoning was the penalty for blasphemy by the Mosaic law (Lev. 24: 16), but Judea was a Roman province, and it was not lawful for the Jews to put any man to death without the sanction of the Roman governor; therefore, early in the morning, members of council, priests and mob conducted Jesus, his hands bound and a cord about his neck, from the hall where the council met to the judgment hall of Pilate.

Who is this Roman whose name is forever to be associated with that of Jesus the Christ? What manner of man is he on whom has fallen the responsibility of passing sentence upon the Son of man.

Of Pilate's origin and family we know very little. He had been appointed procurator of Judea by Tiberius about 25-26 A. D. He had witnessed at least three very violent Jewish insurrections at Jerusalem. The first was caused by his soldiers bringing their standards, bearing the image of the Roman emperor, into the Holy City; the second by his hanging some gilt shields, inscribed with the names of

heathen deities, in his palace at Jerusalem, and the third by his taking temple offerings to provide a better water supply. He despised, hated and feared the people whom he ruled. He had done many things that indicated his willingness to sacrifice the life of a Jew very easily. The Jews had good reason to believe that he would not trouble himself to investigate when he could get rid of the whole matter by simply signing an order for the execution of one whom they had tried and condemned. On the other hand, they knew that he neither trusted nor loved them, and that they would not gain anything by asking it as a favour. His contempt for the Jewish rulers would throw his sympathy, so far as he had any, with the prisoner rather than with his accusers.

Pilate dwelt at Cæsarea, but, during the feast of the passover, stayed in one of his two magnificent palaces in Jerusalem. Jesus was brought to the palace very early that Friday morning. The Jewish hierarchs, afraid of coming in contact with leaven during the passover, would not go into the judgment hall, and it was necessary for Pilate to come out in order to speak to them.

This was the manner of man that was to sit in judgment on Jesus Christ. He was a selfish, sensual representative of a world power in which the voice of conscience was drowned by the loud assertion that might is the only right amongst men. Pilate was a godless man, and yet he was by far the most fair minded man who acted as judge in any of the trials of our Lord.

When he came to the porch of his magnificent palace in Jerusalem that morning; when he looked into the faces of that company of priests and Jewish rulers who were professedly too pious to come into the palace, and, yet, were thirsting for innocent blood; when he looked into the face of Jesus, the prisoner who had been brought be-



fore him, the latent instinct of justice was aroused. To him, as a Roman, one Jewish life more or less was a very small matter. If the signing of this death warrant would prevent an insurrection in which many lives might be lost; if the signing of this death warrant would allay excitement and save trouble, why should he not give these Jewish rulers the authority they ask, and let them take the responsibility? Reasoning in this way, many a professed Christian has deserted, when he should have protected the innocent. The act of Pilate, at this point, will put to shame, by placing in bad contrast, the act of many Christians who have been reckoned worthy a high place in the Christian church. Pilate felt some responsibility for the life of the man that had been brought before him, and he must have some reason for his act. He said, therefore, "What accusation bring ye against this man?"

This was a most pertinent and reasonable question; yet the Jewish rulers did not expect it, and they resented it as impertinent, when they replied, "If he were not an evil doer we would not have delivered him up unto thee." Pilate met this surly answer to his inquiry when he replied, "Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law." By their law they could impose certain penalties without asking the procurator, and he would have no responsibility in the matter. Pilate was more than willing to have nothing to do with the case if he could be free from all responsibility. He probably knew, however, that this would not satisfy the Jewish rulers; and was not surprised when they replied, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." This revealed the real animus and the exact situation. They had brought Jesus to Pilate, not to get his judgment as to whether he ought to be put to death, but merely to get permission to kill him according to forms of law. They would throw on Pilate the re-

sponsibility of condemning a man to death without even knowing the accusation against him.

If there had been any doubt in Pilate's mind as to the innocence of the prisoner this was sufficient to remove it. The men who wished for legal authority to kill were not willing to even state the crime with which their victim was charged. They were thirsting for the life blood of their Messiah, and they might have taken matters in their own hands; they might have accomplished by mob violence what they could not do according to the forms of the law; but this could not be, for the words of Jesus must be fulfilled; he must be lifted up from the earth and must die on the cross and not by stoning.

It was probably at this point, when they seemed about to fail in securing authority for our Lord's crucifixion, that they began to bring their accusations, not in an orderly way, but as an outburst of rage and malice. Nothing is said about blasphemy, the real charge on which they had condemned him; but they say, "We found him perverting our nation, forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, and saying that he himself is Christ a King."

The first charge was so general, and, unsupported by specifications, could only be set down as the reviling that is born of envy, malice and hatred; the second charge, that he had forbidden the giving of tribute to Cæsar, was an unmitigated falsehood; and only the third seemed worth noticing. Pilate may not have known that the second charge was absolutely false; but he knew that if he would kill all the Jews who had objected to paying tribute to Cæsar, he would have a long list of executions. He, therefore, went back into the palace or prætorium, and, calling Jesus unto him, said, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" Jesus replied, "Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee concerning me?"

This question of Jesus was evidently asked in order to enable Pilate to understand the answer that would be given to his question, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" To a Roman, who knew nothing of the promised Messiah, this question meant one thing, but to the believing Jew, who was looking for the coming Son of David, to the intelligent, believing Jew, who was expecting the fulfillment of prophecy, it meant a very different thing. Hence the question, "Sayest thou this of thyself?"

Pilate answered the question, and possibly with an accent of contempt, as he said, "Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests delivered thee unto me. What hast thou done?"

This was equivalent to saying, that he knew nothing about Jesus' claim to kingship, but that his own nation had accused him of claiming to be a king, and had suggested that he was plotting against Cæsar's government. To this answer of Pilate, Jesus replied, "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence."

This answer convinced Pilate that Jesus was not plotting against Cæsar; but it also created in him at least the shadow of reverential awe, and he said to Jesus, "Art thou a king then?"

Jesus replied, "I am. To this end have I been born, and to this end came I into the world that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

This answer bewildered and probably annoyed the sensual Roman, and he exclaimed, "What is truth?" Then he went out again to the Jews and said, "I find no crime in him." These words of the governor were met with an outburst of rage on the part of the Jews. They had

brought the prisoner to Pilate for condemnation and he proclaimed him innocent.

As Pilate listened he heard accusations against Jesus for what he had done in Galilee as well as in Jerusalem, and he asked whether the man were a Galilean. The answer to this question suggested another way of settling the matter, and escaping responsibility. He would send him to Herod, for Galilee was in Herod's jurisdiction, and Herod was then in Jerusalem.

At this point we introduce Matthew's account of the fate of Judas the traitor disciple. This even may have occurred immediately after our Lord's condemnation by the sanhedrin, or it may not have occurred until after the final condemnation by Pilate, but it is, at least, probable that it took place when Jesus was sent to Herod. When Judas saw that his Master was condemned, he seemed to realize what he had done, and was overwhelmed with remorse. Covetousness and hatred had nerved him to do the deed, but the excitement had spent its force, and he saw at least a part of the enormity of his sin. "He repented himself," but not in such a way as to go and confess to his betrayed Lord. The thirty pieces of silver were consuming him, and he went to the elders and chief priests, saying, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood."

If Judas expected sympathy from his confederates in crime he was doomed to disappointment. They had become an angry mob and still thirsted for innocent blood. They had encouraged him when he was planning and executing the betrayal, but now they despised him, and aggravated his remorse, as they said with harsh, haughty contempt, "What is that to us? see thou to it."

Words will not adequately describe the agony of the hopeless, tempest-tossed soul of the traitor as he heard

this retort. He flung the thirty pieces of silver down on the pavement in the holy place, and went out and hanged himself. He found no place for real repentance, and he went to his own place. We have the saddest thought of tongue or pen when we contrast what Judas was with what he might have been. In privilege he was exalted to heaven, yet it was said of him, "Good were it for that man if he had not been born."

The money for which Judas had sold his Lord came into the hands of the priests, and, straining out the gnat, while swallowing the camel, they decided that, since it was the price of blood, it should not go into the Lord's treasury, but should be used to purchase the potters' field for the burial of strangers. In this pseudo-pious transaction of impious men the evangelist Matthew sees the fulfillment of a prophecy. (Zech. 11:12.)

Herod Antipas, to whom Pilate sent Jesus, was the weak, sensual, cunning, cruel, cowardly murderer of John the Baptist, of whom Jesus had spoken as "that fox." Herod was exceedingly glad to have Jesus sent unto him, not only because he may have interpreted Pilate's act as an attempt to establish friendly relations with him, but because he had for a long time desired to see this miracle-worker, hoping to see some of his miracles. When Jesus was before Pilate his attitude was that of quiet, respectful dignity, but when he came before Herod, he refused to recognize him in any way. To all Herod's questions he answered not a word. Nor would he deign to give to that monster of iniquity any answer to the vehement charges that the chief priests and scribes were making against him. Herod and his soldiers taunted and mocked Jesus, arraying him in gorgeous apparel and sending him back to Pilate.



What a spectacle, not only for angels and men, but for the just Judge of all the earth! Civil government an ordinance of God, and Herod occupying the place of a minister of God for justice, with the Perfect Man a prisoner on trial for his life! Nevertheless the act of Herod was a practical acquittal, for he treated the accusation that Christ claimed to be a king as too ridiculous to be taken seriously.

When Jesus was brought the second time before the Roman governor, Pilate was perplexed and troubled. He summoned the chief priests, the sanhedrists and the people, and addressed them very earnestly, saying, "Ye brought unto me this man as one that perverteth the people; and, behold, I, having examined him before you, find no fault in this man touching the things whereof ye have accused him; no, nor yet Herod; for he sent him back unto us; and behold nothing worthy of death hath been done by him."

This was a clear, concise, correct statement of the case. Pilate's forensic skill and experience enabled him to see clearly and state succinctly and convincingly all the essential facts; and his own duty was perfectly plain. The judge had proclaimed the prisoner innocent, and he only needed to add, that he would protect the innocent with all the power that was vested in him as a civil ruler. Instead of doing this, he proposed a compromise, as he said, "I will therefore chastise him and release him."

Why say "*therefore*" I will chastise him? Why chastise one that had been declared innocent? This was the fatal error of the weak and wavering judge. He would yield to popular clamour a part of what was asked. The logical inference was that, if the clamour were loud enough, he would yield everything that was asked. The golden opportunity to vindicate justice, by setting the ab-

solutely innocent absolutely free, was forever lost by this weak and wicked attempt at compromise.

It was probably at this time that another thought came into Pilate's mind. It was his custom at the feast to pardon and release to the multitude as a paschal boon some condemned prisoner. Pilate proposed to condemn Jesus, and then release him as a paschal gift to the people. The very mention of this custom was adapted to conciliate the Jews, but Pilate was trying to blend light with darkness, to mix justice with injustice, and reconcile the irreconcilable. He was compelled to face deadly hatred, envy and malice, in pursuit of innocence, and no compromise was possible. Every attempt at compromise only encouraged the blood thirsty conspirators. The multitude, led by priests and rulers, would have chosen any other prisoner rather than Jesus, the Christ, and they had a notable prisoner named Barabbas whom they did choose.

This offer of Pilate was a wicked tampering with justice, for, if, as he had declared, Jesus was innocent, he could not condemn him even for the purpose of freeing him. We cannot fail to pity, as well as blame, the weak man who was struggling unsuccessfully to escape the responsibility of his position. Never, probably, in all his life, had he felt such a sense of responsibility as oppressed him in dealing with this prisoner. Again he appealed to the multitude saying "whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you?" And, when they answered, "Barabbas," he could only say, as if bewildered and helpless, "What then shall I do unto Jesus who is called Christ?" "What shall I do to him whom ye call the King of the Jews?" To this question the mob, with one voice, cried "Crucify him." When Pilate appealed saying, "Why, what evil hath he done?" his voice was drowned with the cry, "Crucify him."

Up to this time Pilate seemed to stand alone in his defense of Jesus. Of all the blind whose eyes Jesus had opened, of all the deaf whose ears he had unstopped, of all the lepers he had cleansed, of all the broken hearted and bereaved that he had comforted, not one had come forward to speak a word in his behalf. But from an unexpected source the governor received a strange message, even as he was sitting on the judgment seat. The message was from Claudia Procula, his wife, saying, "Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." On a Roman, like Pilate, who remembered the death of Julius Cæsar and the dream of Cæsar's wife, these words must have made a profound impression. Nor can we fail to be deeply impressed when we remember that the only words spoken in defense of our Lord when he was on trial were spoken by a pagan woman.

Pilate would very gladly have heeded the entreaty of his wife, for he had been struggling to escape all responsibility for doing anything with Jesus, but he had been tampering with justice, and was afraid to do right. He had been looking at the whole matter from the standpoint of self, and he dreaded an insurrection that might result in his own removal from office. He knew that Jesus was innocent, and that he had been delivered up by wicked, envious enemies, but he was a coward, and would betray the innocent and sacrifice justice rather than endanger his own selfish interests.

The exact order of events at this point is uncertain; but, inasmuch as John was an eye witness, and gives the most detailed account, we follow his narrative. The message from Pilate's wife, reported only by Matthew, would cause some delay and stimulate Pilate to devise some other method of escaping responsibility for sen-

tencing Jesus, but he still moved forward to the consummation of his great judicial crime, and he ordered Jesus to be scourged. This was a preparation for the crucifixion; but Pilate may have thought that the terrible sufferings from this scourging would satisfy the multitude and that the crucifixion might not be necessary.

The scourging probably took place in the presence of the multitude; and, when it was ended, Jesus was led back into the prætorium, where he was crowned with thorns and arrayed in a purple robe—probably the gorgeous purple in which Herod and his enemies had clothed him—and insulted by contemptuous cries of, “Hail, King of the Jews!” Pilate then took the bleeding, suffering Jesus out to the multitude, and appealed to their sense of justice and their pity saying, “Behold, I bring him out to you, that ye may know that I find no crime in him.” Then, as the multitude looked on their king crowned with thorns, Pilate said “Ecce homo!”

It was such a sight as might have stirred pity in hearts of stone; but these were blood thirsty wolves, and this sight only added to their thirst for innocent blood. In that multitude were the respectable citizens of Jerusalem, the religious leaders of that day; in that multitude were many who had within a week shouted “hosanna,” as Jesus entered Jerusalem.

What is the psychological explanation? What has demonized respectable men and women and made them more blood thirsty than wild beasts? Whence this cruel, malicious, murderous demand for the crucifixion of the kind and gentle Saviour of lost men?

No adequate explanation can be found that ignores our Lord's declaration, “the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me,” or as he declared again, “This is your hour and the power of darkness.” It was all the

result of poor human nature being controlled by the powers of darkness. Alas, for the man who trusts in man when calamities come and the winds and waves of adversity overwhelm him! Jesus was down, he was the victim of popular condemnation and the multitude took savage delight in helping to crush him.

The men who led the multitude in this horrid outrage against the perfect Son of man were chief priests and officers, the religious teachers and prominent men of the Jewish nation. They had been hardened by handling the husks of holy things until they were even more cruel and compassionless than men who made no pretensions to be religious. This is true of men in every generation. The most heartless, most cruel, most diabolical crimes have been committed by men who have the forms, but have not felt the power of godliness. When avarice and covetousness don the cloak of piety we may expect abnormal crimes.

When Pilate saw the utter lack of pity, and heard again the cry for blood, he loathed the whole miserable business, and exclaimed impatiently, "Take him yourselves and crucify him; for I find no crime in him." Then, for the first time in Pilate's presence, they brought forth the real charge on which the sanhedrin had condemned Jesus, as they said, "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die because he made himself the Son of God."

When Pilate heard this, he was the more afraid. It aroused his superstition or his reverential awe, and, going again into the palace to talk with the innocent prisoner whom he had scourged, he said to Jesus, "Whence art thou?" Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate then said, "Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to release thee, and have power to condemn thee?"



There were elements of tenderness and reverence in Pilate's voice as he said this, and Jesus answered him with divine dignity, saying, "Thou wouldst have no power against me, except it were given thee from above; therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath greater sin."

How little Pilate and the angry multitude outside his great judgment hall seem when we hear these sublime words of Jesus! They impressed Pilate profoundly and he again sought to release Jesus, but the Jews took up another cry, saying, "If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend; every one that maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar."

The words of Jesus had summoned Pilate before the just Judge of all the earth, and, impressed with a sense of his responsibility to this highest court, he sought to release Jesus; but the cry of the multitude reminded him of his dependence on Tiberius Cæsar, and Cæsar seemed a nearer and more real monarch than the King of kings. Pilate could not afford to offend Cæsar even to please him who rules on high. He had no real faith in God; more than one complaint against his government had already gone to Rome, and if this cry, that he was not Cæsar's friend, should be added, he might lose his place. He was in the utmost perplexity and doubt, and again sat down on the judgment seat at a place called the Pavement, and, then, placing Jesus where he could be seen by the Jews, he said, "Behold, your King!" His words were met with shouts and cries, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him!"

Pilate replied, and, no doubt, with angry contempt, "Shall I crucify your king?"

The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Cæsar."

This was the end of the trial. The Jews had rejected their Messiah and demanded that he should be put to death. Pilate's effort to save Jesus had compelled them to choose a noted robber, possibly a false Christ, in preference to their own Messiah, and, in order to destroy Jesus, they openly proclaimed that they had no king but Cæsar.

There still remained one act; an act that could not free the Roman governor from responsibility, and yet it did emphasize the responsibility assumed by the Jewish people. When Pilate saw that he could not save Jesus without facing an insurrection, he took water and washed his hands in the presence of the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man; see ye to it." All the people answered, "His blood be on us, and on our children."

"He that sitteth in the heavens heard and saw it all. That water did not wash away the guilt of Pilate when he condemned an innocent man; but it did help to fix on the Jewish people the entire responsibility for the blackest crime recorded in all the pages of human history. How terribly that crime has been avenged let history tell. The Jews would have no king but Cæsar, and, before a generation had passed, a Cæsar had besieged Jerusalem, destroying the city and the temple. In that siege a million Jews miserably perished, and for nineteen centuries the Jews have been scattered abroad over the face of the earth. They knew not the day of their visitation.

The trial was ended, the Son of man was sentenced to death by crucifixion. In all generations men will read and say that the Lord Jesus Christ was "crucified under Pontius Pilate." In the providence of God, Pilate had the great responsibility of pronouncing judgment on the Son of God, He sought in many ways to escape that responsi-

bility, but he could not. His great question was, "What shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" And he answered it by ordering his crucifixion.

The cause of Pilate's failure in the great crisis of his life is indicated by his question, "What is truth?" Had he known the truth, the truth would have set him free, and he would have done right. His wisdom was of this world, not the wisdom that cometh from above. He had righteous instincts, but he was in the presence of the powers of darkness and did not realize that he was in the presence of God, the ruler and rewarder of men. Had he known the true God and Jesus Christ whom God had sent, he might have sacrificed his mortal life, but he would have inherited eternal life. The question that Pilate answered when he wrote his order for the crucifixion of Jesus Christ is the question that every man must answer who hears the gospel, and it may be that many who condemn Pilate are following his example.

## LXIV

### THE CRUCIFIXION

Mark 14: 38. "And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom."

(Matthew 27: 27-56; Mark 15: 16-41; Luke 23: 26-49; John 19: 17-37.)

**W**E do not undertake to reconcile the narratives of Mark and John as to the exact hour of the day at which Jesus was led away to be crucified, except to say that the two writers evidently used different methods of reckoning time, and that, in all probability, Mark specifies the hour according to the Jewish method of reckoning. The third hour would, therefore, be nine o'clock in the forenoon.

The ridicule and mockery of Jesus, reported by John as taking place immediately after the scourging, was interrupted by Pilate in order that he might present Jesus to the multitude and make a last appeal to their pity; and when this appeal failed and Jesus was sentenced, he was again led into the prætorium where the more elaborate mockery, abuse and ridicule, spoken of by Matthew and Mark, occurred.

Our Christian civilization has so modified the treatment of prisoners who have been condemned to death that we can hardly understand how any one, having the slightest semblance of manhood, could find it in his heart to torture a poor condemned prisoner as these prætorium guards—

not Roman soldiers—tortured and abused the pure and perfect Son of man after he had been scourged and sentenced to death. Nevertheless, the morbid curiosity that brings a crowd to the court room to gloat over abnormal exhibitions of crime and wretchedness, and the demoniacal fury of mobs show that human nature, led by the powers of darkness, is always the same, and is capable of unspeakable cruelty. These vile, ignoble guards gloated over suffering, and found fiendish delight in going through all the parts of a mock coronation, putting on the scarlet or purple robe, and pressing the crown of thorns on the bleeding brow of the Son of God, while they cried, "Hail, King of the Jews!" To contrast the spirit of these cruel, inhuman persecutors with the spirit of the compassionate Son of man on whom they were heaping ridicule and all kinds of abuse, is to contrast the spirit of hell with the spirit of heaven.

After the guard of soldiers had grown weary of their cruel, brutality, they stripped Jesus of the scarlet robe and put on him his own garments and led him forth to execution. Two other prisoners were to be crucified with him, that the visitors to the feast might carry with them to their homes a dread of Roman punishment. As was the custom, Jesus went forth bearing the cross on which he was to die; but he had not tasted food since the pass-over supper, and his agony in Gethsemane, his trials before the Jewish courts, before Pilate and before Herod, his scourging and abuse, had exhausted his strength so that he was physically unable to carry his cross to the place of execution, and sank beneath the load. The soldiers then pressed into service an African from Cyrene, known as the father of Rufus and Alexander, and compelled him to bear the cross after Jesus.



We have no reliable information as to the exact place of execution. It was called Golgotha, or Calvary, which means "a skull," but whether it took its name from its resemblance to a human skull, or from the fact that the skulls of those who had been crucified could be seen there, no one knows. We are accustomed to think and speak of Calvary as a hill, but we have no reliable information to warrant our regarding it as an elevated place. The sieges through which the city of Jerusalem has passed, and the changes in the wall have so thoroughly changed the place that there could be no possibility of our ever knowing the exact spot. We only know that it was outside the city gate, and not far from the city.

There are many traditions concerning the *via dolorosa*, but only one incident is recorded by the evangelist Luke, and it probably occurred after the cross had been laid on Simon the Cyrenean. Only one voice had been heard in our Lord's defense when he was on trial, and that was the voice of a pagan woman; and, now, as he is led out to execution, Luke says, "There followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who bewailed and lamented him."

It is a remarkable statement. Where were the disciples who had been with him for three years? Where were the blind whose eyes he had opened? Where were the lepers he had cleansed? Did none of these weep as they saw their benefactor's sufferings? It is probable that the exhibitions of grief on the part of the women were less restrained and controlled than the no less sincere grief of many of the men who were in the procession; nevertheless, Jesus addresses himself especially to the women, saying, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are coming, in which they shall say, Blessed are

the barren, and the breasts that never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us, and to the hills, Cover us." "For if they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"

It was Christ-like for Jesus to forget his own suffering and prepare these weeping ones to meet the sorrows that were coming upon them. But what is meant by the "green tree and the dry?" Was he, suffering at the hands of cruel men and by the justice of God in the outworking of the great plan of redemption, the "green tree"? Are those who reject him as a personal Saviour the "dry tree"? Is it equivalent to saying, if the justice of God permits and ordains such sufferings for his own Son in order that sin may be expiated, what shall be done to the sinners who reject Jesus as their Saviour and decide to stand in their own places?

These words of Jesus could be applied to the sufferings of the inhabitants of Jerusalem when the dead tree of Judaism was cut down and the temple destroyed, but they have a wider sweep; they suggest the scene on the judgment day, when all shall stand before the great white throne.

The evangelists do not attempt to describe the indescribable horror of nailing the victim to the "accursed tree," nor shall we attempt any pen picture of this terrible and revolting mode of execution. It was probably while our Lord was enduring this awful physical agony that he cried, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." The followers of Christ when suffering grievous wrongs at the hands of their fellow men have, by the grace of God, been able to offer up this prayer; but only the Captain of our Salvation could with fulness of meaning offer such a prayer in such circumstances. He had wept over the sinful inhabitants of Jerusalem who knew not the

day of their visitation, and now he seems to forget his own sufferings as he prays for his murderers. As we read these words we catch a glimpse of the omnipotence of love and the boundlessness of divine compassion.

It was probably before the nailing to the cross that Jesus was offered wine mingled with an opiate, but he would not drink it, choosing rather to suffer the agony of the cup that he had accepted from the Father in order to redeem his people.

Whether by design or by accident the cross to which Jesus was nailed was between the other two, so that in his dying agony he had a malefactor on either side, and the prophecy that he was numbered with transgressors was fulfilled and emphasized.

The superscription over Jesus seems to have been unnoticed by the Jewish rulers until after the cross had been erected, but, when they saw, written in Latin, Greek and Hebrew, so that all might read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," the chief priests came to Pilate, saying, "Write not The King of the Jews, but that he said, I am King of the Jews."

To this request Pilate replied, "What I have written I have written."

The Jews had rejected their king, and had secured his crucifixion, and the writing was not changed. The true King of the Jews and King of men was on his throne of power when he was lifted up from the earth on the cross. The malice and hatred and envy of the Jews had placed him on a throne where he would draw all men unto himself, and would establish a world-wide and everlasting kingdom. The inscription, written by Pilate's order, may have been intended for a deadly insult to the Jewish people, but it was true. The sufferer on the cross was indeed the King of the Jews and the King of men. Things are

not always what they seem, and what seemed to shortsighted men a victory of the prince of this world and of wicked men, was, in reality, the triumph of the Prince of peace, the triumph of good over evil, and the casting out of the prince of this world. Christ on the cross was and is the mighty Saviour and Conqueror of a lost world.

Mark tells us that the crucifixion took place at the third hour about nine o'clock in the forenoon. After the crucifixion, four soldiers and a centurion, possibly four soldiers for each victim, were left to guard against any possible attempt to rescue the sufferers. These four soldiers proceeded at once to divide amongst themselves the garments of Jesus, giving to each one a part. When they came to the coat or tunic, and found it was woven from the top throughout, and seamless, they cast lots for it.

As we read this record, we are amazed that men should be so utterly cruel and compassionless in the presence of such mortal agony, but the inspired writer reminds us that this incident formed a part of the divine plan, for he says this was done, "that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which saith,

"They parted my garments among them,  
And upon my vesture did they cast lots." (Ps. 22: 17.)

In immediate connection with his report of this action of the guards, John relates another incident that reveals the exquisite filial affection of Jesus, even when he is in mortal agony. The mother of Jesus, with Mary the wife of Cleopas, Mary Magdalene, and John, the beloved disciple, was standing by the cross. The words spoken by the aged Simeon were fulfilled in part, at least, for a sword was piercing through Mary's own soul as she gazed helplessly on her beloved Son hanging on the cross in mortal

agony. Did her faith waiver in this dark and dreadful hour? Did she still believe that her Son should be known as the Son of the Most High, and that he should sit on the throne of David, reigning over the house of Jacob forever? Could she still say, as she had once said, "My soul doth magnify the Lord?"

These questions are not answered for us, and we cannot answer them, but the evangelist John tells us that Jesus saw his mother and the beloved disciple standing by his cross; that he first said to his mother, "Woman, behold thy son!" and then said to John, "Behold thy mother!" His hands were nailed to the cross and he could not accompany his words with a gesture, but his meaning could not be mistaken, and from that time onward the mother of Jesus made the home of the beloved disciple her home. The sufferings of Jesus did not lead him to lose sight of the tender love that had cherished him in the old home at Nazareth, nor did he forget the present sorrows or future needs of his mother. He had lived for others, and when the end of life came he was poorer than the foxes and the birds; the soldiers had seized and divided amongst themselves everything that he could have called his own, and he could make no provision for his mother except to commend her to the affectionate care of his beloved disciple, and this he did as he hung on the cross.

As we read the brief record of our Lord's thoughtful care of his mother, we catch a glimpse of heaven, and breathe an atmosphere of love. When we look at the surroundings, and hear the words of Christ's enemies, we catch a glimpse of hell, and breathe the atmosphere of hatred and malice. It was not enough that Jesus the Christ had been condemned and crucified; it was not enough that he was enduring the unspeakable agony of the most horrible form of death that fiendish cruelty could



invent; the chief priests, the scribes and the elders of the people joined with the mob in seeking to add, if possible, to the agony of these last hours. They railed on him, wagging their heads, saying in derision and scorn, "Ha! thou that destroyeth the temple and buildest it in three days, save thyself, and come down from the cross."

Seeking to mock and revile Jesus, without knowing it, they proclaimed his true spirit and his great mission, when they said, "He saved others; himself he cannot save." He could only come down from the cross and save himself by abandoning his purpose to save others, for he came to give himself a ransom for others.

One of the malefactors, and possibly both at the first, joined in this reproach, but their own mortal agony led them very different ways; for, while one railed on Jesus, saying, "Art thou not the Christ? save thyself and us"; the other rebuked him saying, "Dost thou not even fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom."

So far as earthly courts and the judgments of men were concerned, these two men were in the same condemnation; but, in the sight of him who reads the heart and judges righteously, they were separated by a great gulf. One was a bitter, malicious, unbelieving scoffer, while the heart of the other had been touched, and he was a humble, believing, penitent, saved sinner, and Jesus said to him, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." He was on the cross and had only a few hours to live, and these few hours would be spent in mortal agony; yet, he was infinitely better off than the sordid, sensual, malicious Sadducean priests, scribes and rulers, who passed by and mocked the suffering Saviour. He had found and ac-

cepted the Saviour whom they had rejected and crucified, and he would soon be with Jesus in Paradise, in the resting place of the blessed dead.

When the sixth hour came there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. The first three evangelists tell us of this three hours darkness, Luke speaking of it as "the sun's light failing." We have no explanation of the nature or extent of this darkness, except that it was "over the whole land," and that it lasted from the sixth to the ninth hour. There is good reason for believing that it was neither an ordinary, nor an extraordinary eclipse; but we can either believe that it was a prelude to the coming earthquake, and produced by natural causes, or we may believe that it was wholly supernatural, the direct act of God forbidding the sun to shine on this last act in the divine tragedy. The Christian believer will see in it the hand of God in either case. He who planned man's redemption before the foundation of the world can work out his plans with or without the use of secondary causes.

When the ninth hour came Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani: My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" After this he said, "I thirst." Immediately, one of them who stood by "ran and took a sponge and put it on a reed and gave him to drink," and, with others, said, "Let be; let us see whether Elijah cometh to save him."

It is thought by some that this was said, not in earnest, but in derision because it seems inconsistent with the ridicule and scoffing that preceded it; but may we not rather believe that the hours of darkness had awed and impressed these scoffers until they were ready to expect some divine interposition. They did not see in this loud cry of the dying Saviour what the Christian sees; for they did not understand how the Lamb of God was to bear the sins

of his people and reconcile them to God making expiation for their sin. Nor can we comprehend the whole mystery of suffering, so as to understand or explain the horror that caused this cry of distress. We only know that when Jesus was nailed to the cross, he prayed for his enemies, saying, "Father, forgive them"; when he hung on the cross he thought of the sufferings of his mother, and secured her a home; when the penitent thief appealed to him, he spoke words of comfort; and in all his sufferings there was no cry of distress until he was forsaken of God.

After the sponge had been pressed to his lips, Jesus said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit"; and then exclaiming, "It is finished," he bowed his head, and gave up the spirit. At that moment the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. This fact is reported by the first three evangelists, and Matthew adds, "The earth did quake, and the rocks were rent; and the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints that had fallen asleep were raised; and, coming forth out of the tombs after his resurrection, they entered into the holy city, and appeared unto many."

The rending of the veil of the temple was the most significant fact, and was reported by the three inspired writers. There is no doubt but that the particular veil referred to was the veil that hung between the holy place and the Holy of Holies, and the rending of that veil signified that the way into the holiest had been opened. The account of the earthquake rending the rocks may suggest the physical connection between the death of Christ on Calvary and the rending the veil of the temple; but the real connection was symbolic and supernatural. (See Hebrews 10:19-21.)

It does not lie within the sphere of this work to enter into any discussion of the questions concerning the res-

urrection of "many bodies of the saints" and their appearance after Christ's resurrection; but, we may say, in passing, that no one who accepts the great central truths of the gospel need be troubled by the fact that this incident is not more fully explained. As the rending of the veil of the temple, which was in a peculiar sense the symbol of Christ's body, the visible covering that enshrined and concealed the abode of deity, indicated the opening up of a new and living way of access to God, so, too, the opening of these graves symbolized the truth that Christ's death was the beginning of a new life for his people.

The Roman centurion who witnessed the death of Jesus, and heard his last words, and saw some of these supernatural events exclaimed, "Truly this was a just man! Truly this was the Son of God!" The fickle multitude, many of whom had joined in the cry to crucify Jesus, when they saw what was done, returned to Jerusalem smiting upon their breasts, and there was everywhere a feeling of distress and foreboding of coming sorrows.

Thus ended the mortal life of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Man. To man's blindfold eye this life seemed a great failure. It began in a stable and ended on a cross. No man ever succeeded in arraying against himself more deadly enemies. The worldly-wise, who knew him, could not deny that Jesus of Nazareth had remarkable powers, but they would say also that he lacked tact and prudence, making enemies where he might have made friends; and the friends he made were weak and fickle, while the enemies he made were powerful and unrelenting. From the standpoint of the selfish, sensual, worldling the life of Jesus was a failure. But, looked at in the light of truth, and from the standpoint of real manhood, it was

the most triumphant life that was ever lived on this earth, even if this had been the end. Not one blot is found in the whole record. In word, in thought, in act, he was always the perfect man. Neither the flattery of friends, nor the threatenings nor the persecutions of enemies; neither hope nor fear ever caused him to swerve for one moment from the path of rectitude. He was condemned by the ecclesiastical courts of his own nation, and was sentenced to death by the civil government under which he lived; yet the civil ruler proclaimed him innocent; the malefactor, hanging on another cross, confessed his own guilt, but declared Christ innocent, while the Roman officer, who witnessed his death, said, "Certainly this was a righteous man."

The study of this life for nineteen hundred years has resulted in the universal judgment that Jesus of Nazareth was holy, harmless and undefiled, that he went about doing good, that he was the unique, the perfect Man. These facts are worth remembering. They are adapted to comfort sincere, honest, pure, good men whom the world persecutes and calls tactless, impractical failures. If men are called on to suffer innocently, their sufferings serve to identify them with Jesus Christ the perfect man, and, if they are accused of imprudence merely because they are loyal to truth and right, they should remember that the disciple is as his Lord.

But, more than this, the crucifixion of Christ is the crowning proof of the wickedness of the human heart. Men may deny the doctrine of total depravity, or they may make extravagant statements affirming it; but it should ever be remembered that, when the Perfect Man came into the world, the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant, the religious formalist and the godless



sensualist, the church and the state, conspired and combined to persecute and murder him. When men could combine to crucify Jesus of Nazareth, is there any crime that would seem too enormous, too hideous?

The whole history of Christ's life and death, as we find it in the narratives by the different evangelists, shows that he was infinitely more than the perfect man; and, in his crucifixion, we see more than the wicked acts of wicked men. In Christ's death we see the outworking of the divine plan for revealing God's sovereign love in redeeming his people. Wicked men, with wicked hands, took and slew Jesus, but they were, at the same time only working out the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God. It was necessary that Jesus should suffer death in order to redeem his people, for "what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh," God did accomplish by sending his own Son and making him an offering for sin. Jesus Christ laid down his life willingly, when he poured out his soul unto death and bore our sins in his own body on the tree. "We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted, but he was wounded for our transgressions and pierced for our sins." There may be some question whether we should sing,

"When God the mighty Maker died,"

but there is no room for doubt that the sufferer on the cross was the divine Son of God, as well as the son of man.

In the death of Christ we see what sin in human hearts is capable of doing, and thus see sin from the human view-point. In the death of Christ, as it is explained in the sacred Scriptures, we see Jesus suffering for the sins of his people, and, therefore, see sin from the

view-point of divine justice, or as the justice of God sees it. In the death of Christ we see the supreme exhibition of divine love for sinful men, for God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Everything centers in the death of Christ. Paul gave expression to the very essence of Christian faith, when he exclaimed, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," and every true disciple can sing,

"In the cross of Christ I glory,  
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;  
All the light of sacred story,  
Gathers round its head sublime."

The Romans usually left the bodies of those who had been crucified on their crosses until they decayed; but the Jewish rulers, who had not scrupled to condemn and crucify the innocent, were not willing to have a dead body hanging on the cross on the Sabbath day, and they, therefore, besought Pilate to command the soldiers to break the legs of those who were crucified, so that their deaths might be hastened and their bodies removed before the beginning of the Sabbath. This request was readily ganted; but it was not carried out so far as the body of Jesus was concerned. Had his legs been broken, he would have failed in one of the specifications concerning the paschal lamb, of which God had said, "Neither shall ye break a bone thereof." When the soldiers had broken the legs of the two malefactors they came to Jesus, and, when they found that he was dead already, "they brake not his legs; but one of them with a spear pierced his side, and straightway there came out blood and water." By this act, another Scripture was fulfilled,

for it was written, "They shall look on him whom they pierced." (Zech. 12:10.) No part of the divine plan could be set aside, and no type nor promise could fail.

It may not be possible to understand or explain the great mystery of suffering, why it was necessary for Jesus Christ to die in order to redeem his people. We may not be able to comprehend all the meaning of the prophecy that he was to be wounded for our transgressions, or the declaration of the apostle Paul that he bore our sins in his own body on the tree. Nevertheless, the great fact is clearly revealed that it was necessary for Jesus to die in order to save sinners. Jesus declared that for this cause he came into the world. He said that, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so must the Son of man be lifted up that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but should have eternal life. He declared also that, when he was lifted up from the earth, he would become the great center of beneficent attraction for the whole world, and to-day, we see a marvellous fulfillment of this strange prophecy.

## LXV

### THE RESURRECTION

2 Timothy 2:8. "Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, of the seed of David, according to my gospel."

(Matthew 27:57-28:20; Mark 15:42-16:20; Luke 23:50-24:53; John 19:38-21:25.)

**T**HE Pharisees took a prominent, if not the leading part in persecuting Jesus during his public ministry, and the Sadducees seemed comparatively indifferent. This was probably owing to the fact that Jesus was constantly brought into direct contact with the Pharisees in the synagogues throughout Galilee, while he had but little to do with priests, scribes and sanhedrists, except when he came to Jerusalem. The Pharisees joined with the Sadducees to destroy Jesus; nevertheless, it was the Sadducees rather than the Pharisees that secured his crucifixion. The ordinary Pharisee had some conscience, and cared for religious truth, so that he was only wholly bad when he was thoroughly hypocritical. His peculiar, besetting sin was hypocrisy. There were amongst the Pharisees some sincere men who secretly, if not publicly, were friendly toward Jesus of Nazareth, and from some of the Pharisees Jesus received courteous treatment. The Sadducees, on the other hand, were bitterly hostile whenever they came in contact with him. His indignation was kindled against them when, at the beginning of his public ministry, he saw their covetous, avaricious, sacrilegious traffic in the temple, and drove the money changers from

his Father's house. This interference with a business that yielded the high priest and other Sadducees large revenues incurred their deadly enmity, and they only waited for an opportunity to wreak their vengeance. They were sensual materialists who only professed godliness in order to increase their gains or worldly wealth. Not one of them is ever reported as doing Jesus a kindness or showing him a courtesy. When our Lord cleansed the temple the second time, declaring that the traffickers had made his Father's house a den of robbers, there was an irreconcilable conflict with the chief priests, scribes, sandedrists and the whole Sadducean party, and this conflict ended in the crucifixion. In the trials of Jesus the Pharisees seemed to drop out of sight. They had helped to prepare the way for it, and had their responsibility, but they were no longer leaders.

Jesus died on the cross at the ninth hour, or three o'clock in the afternoon, and the Sabbath would be ushered in by sunset. The Jews had provided against ceremonial pollution by having so arranged that the bodies should be taken from the cross, but they had not troubled themselves about the burial. It had been written that Jesus should make his grave "with the rich in his death"; but how was this to be accomplished? Who amongst the disciples of Jesus was rich? Or what rich man would accept the odium of identifying himself with the crucified one?

These questions are answered as we read of Joseph of Arimathea, a rich Pharisee, a disciple of Jesus, but secretly up to this time for fear of the Jews. This man came to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus that he might bury it in his own new tomb. When Pilate ascertained from the centurion that Jesus was dead, he granted Joseph's request, and Joseph, together with Nicodemus, an-



other Pharisee, took the body, wrapped it in fine linen, using a hundred pounds of a mixture of myrrh and aloes, and laid it in Joseph's new rock-hewn tomb, in which no man had ever yet been laid. This noble act does not warrant us in excusing Joseph and Nicodemus for not giving Jesus their open and hearty support while he was living; but it touches every Christian heart, and will ever be regarded as one of the profoundly pathetic incidents connected with the death of our Lord. As we read of the burial of Jesus, our indignation against Pharisees gives place to pity and compassion.

When the body of Jesus was laid in the tomb, a great stone was rolled to the door. This completed the burial, but Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and others, who had followed Jesus out of Galilee, had witnessed the acts of Joseph and Nicodemus, and, having marked the place, went home to prepare spices, so that after the Sabbath they might bring their tributes of affection and complete the embalming of the body of their Lord.

When the enemies of Jesus secured his crucifixion, instead of resting on the Sabbath, for which they professed to have so great reverence, they went to Pilate on the Sabbath, saying, "Sir, we remember that this deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day."

There is no record of Jesus ever having said this to the Jews, and they probably referred to his declaration concerning the temple of his body, when he said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will rear it up." When Jesus was on trial, false witnesses had testified that he had threatened to destroy the temple and rear it up in three days, and the rulers then gave no hint that

they had understood him to speak of the temple of his body; but, now, they incidentally reveal the fact that they knew he was speaking of his own body.

The chief priests and Pharisees did not profess to fear that Jesus would rise, but they did profess to fear that his disciples might come and steal his body and then proclaim that he had risen. Pilate's contempt appeared in his curt answer, as he said, "Ye have a guard; go your way and make it as sure as ye can." If the Jews really feared that the disciples would steal the body of Jesus they should have been satisfied when they affixed the Roman seal and placed the guard of soldiers. The disciples, who had forsaken their Master while he was alive, could not be expected to overcome the Roman soldiers, break the Roman seal and carry away the dead body.

The friends of Jesus rested on the Sabbath, according to the commandment. Whether they cherished any hope of his resurrection as they communed with their own hearts and with each other on that sad day of sacred rest, we do not know, but we have good reasons for believing that they did not. Their only source of comfort was in the thought that the awful agony of the crucifixion had been succeeded by rest in the tomb, that their friend had gone where the wicked cease from troubling.

On the first day of the week, the women, who had been last at the cross, were the first at the tomb of their beloved Lord. At early dawn, while it was yet dark, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and other women, in different groups, came bringing their spices to complete the embalming of the body. They knew not that a guard of Roman soldiers had been stationed there and that the tomb was sealed; for, as they drew near, they were saying amongst themselves, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the tomb?" There were greater obstacles in

the way of their performing this labour of love than they had imagined. Not only must the stone be rolled away; the whole power of the Roman government must be met and overcome before they could touch the body of their Lord. But a greater power than that of Rome was guarding that hallowed resting place of the body of the Son of man, and, before the coming of the women, "There was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. His appearance was as lightning and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of him the watchers did quake, and become as dead men."

The different evangelists give independent and very different accounts of what the women saw and did, but their accounts do not contradict each other. No one professes to give a complete account, and each one calls our attention to some particular incident without specifying the exact order of events. Comparing all the narratives we find that Mary Magdalene had the most prominent part. She and Mary the mother of James probably came first of all, and, when they saw the great stone rolled away, they entered into the tomb, and "saw a young man sitting on the right side arrayed in a white robe; and they were amazed." The young man said to them, "Be not amazed; ye seek Jesus the Nazarene, who hath been crucified; he is risen; he is not here; behold the place where they laid him. But go tell his disciples and Peter, He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you." After hearing this, the women "went out and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them, and they said nothing to any one; for they were afraid."

This is Mark's account of what took place that morning, and it is wholly consistent with the statement by

Matthew that these women were amongst the number of those who ran with joy to bring the disciples word; and with the record found in John, that Mary Magdalene ran and found Peter and John, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb and we know not where they have laid him." At first, these women were so amazed that they could speak to no one; but, quickly recovering, they hastened to carry their message that had been given them. Moreover, if we accept as genuine the last twelve verses of the gospel by Mark, Mary Magdalene is mentioned as carrying the message to the disciples.

The record of Luke seems more perplexing, since he speaks of two men in dazzling apparel, not sitting, but standing. These two men say to the affrighted women, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen; remember how he spake unto you, when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered up into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified and the third day rise again." The perplexity will vanish, however, if we recognize the fact that Luke crowds into this brief statement the occurrences of forty days. It is more than probable that the women reached the tomb in groups, and not simultaneously; and another group of women may have seen what Mary Magdalene did not see, so that there is no necessary conflict between Luke's account and that of Mark.

John gives the longest and probably most consecutive account of the occurrences at the tomb that Easter morning; and, reading his account, we see how the narratives of the synoptic writers fit into each other. Mary Magdalene came first to the tomb, and, seeing the stone rolled away, received her message for Peter; then she hastened to find Peter and the other disciples. When she found

Peter and John, she exclaimed, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him." Peter and John both ran to the tomb, but John outran Peter, and, coming first to the tomb, looked in and saw the linen cloths, and the napkin, but did not enter. When Peter came he entered, saw the linen cloths lying and the napkin, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself. When John also entered the tomb and he saw and believed.

Hitherto the disciples had not known what was meant by their Master's "rising from the dead." After this Peter and John went away again to their own homes. In the meantime, Mary Magdalene had returned to the tomb, and, after standing without weeping and bewildered, she stooped and looked into the tomb and saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. The angels said to her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" she saith unto them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." When she had thus said, she turned herself and beheld Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus, but, supposing him to be the gardener, exclaimed, "Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said unto her, "Mary." As she heard that voice calling her own name, she turned and exclaimed in Hebrew, "Rabboni." That one word, "Mary," spoken by her risen Lord, thrilled her whole being and introduced her to a new world. In her transport of joy, she, who had been forgiven much and loved much, probably sought to clasp her Lord's feet that she had once anointed, but "Jesus said unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father, but go unto my brethren, and say unto them, I



ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God."

This was the first appearance, and these were the first words of the risen Jesus. This marked a new era in the history of humanity. Jesus Christ had risen from the dead, and appeared as the first fruits of them that sleep. Job's question was answered; a man has lived and died and lives again, and is alive forevermore. Jesus had claimed the power to lay down his life and to take it again, and now he has come forth victor over death and the grave. Others had been raised from the dead, but here is the first real victor, the first one who could say, "I am alive forevermore."

Other women and two of the disciples had seen the empty tomb; other women had been told by the angels that Jesus had risen, but Mary Magdalene alone saw him and heard his voice and received from him his first message as her risen Lord, when she was directed to tell the disciples of his ascension to the Father.

How far Mary comprehended the meaning of her message we do not know. It is probable that she did not stop to think what our Lord's ascending to the Father meant; she was so filled and so thrilled by the thought that he was alive that all other thoughts were excluded. When she found the disciples she exclaimed, "I have seen the Lord," and then she delivered her message. Two of the disciples had seen the empty tomb and they had believed that Jesus had risen from the dead, but, when they were told that he had been seen alive, they could not and did not believe.

The testimony of Mary Magdalene was soon confirmed by others; for it is at least probable that the account recorded by the evangelist Matthew (Matthew 28:9-10) occurred soon after Jesus had appeared to Mary. As-

suming this to be true, Jesus met the other women, and said to them, "All hail," and, after they came and took hold of his feet and worshipped him, he sent them also to tell the brethren that he was alive, and that he would meet them in Galilee.

It is impossible to determine the exact order of events at the tomb of Jesus on that first Easter morning, since each evangelist evidently aims to convince his readers of the great fact of the resurrection, and loses sight of all that is merely incidental. The order of events is not important except in so far as a knowledge of the order may explain seeming conflict in the different accounts, and may afford a fuller realization of the great central, all important fact that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. To this great facts all the evangelists testify in the most unequivocal and unmistakable language, and their accounts supplement, explain and confirm each other. If the four accounts had been so evidently harmonious that no thought of conflict could be suggested, the inference might be that the writers were in collusion, and that the narratives were not independent. If there had been only one narrative, many questions would arise, for which we would have no satisfactory answer. For example, Mark, Luke and John do not answer the questions that arise as to the possibility of the body being taken from the tomb. Matthew alone tells us of the placing of a guard of soldiers at the tomb, and he alone answers the very pertinent question as to what became of this guard. After telling of the angel coming and rolling away the stone, he says, "The watchers did quake and became as dead men." From Matthew only we learn that some of the guard came into the city and told the chief priests "all the things that were come to pass"; that a meeting of the sanhedrin was called; that, after they had counselled together, they

bribed the soldiers to say that the disciples had stolen the body while they slept, at the same time assuring the soldiers that they would guard them against any trouble that might arise if the governor should hear of it.

If this incident, recorded by Matthew only, should seem incredible, we only need to remember that the sanhedrists and soldiers were equally interested in this conspiracy. For the soldiers to report the truth to Pilate, was to put themselves in the hands of the executioner, unless they could convince him of the truth of this supernatural event. They were, therefore, interested in concealing the whole matter. They were afraid to tell the truth because the governor might not believe it, and, if he did not, he would put them to death. On the other hand, the Jewish rulers were afraid that the people would believe the report of the soldiers, and they knew that, if the people did believe, it would result in the utter overthrow of their own power, and the condemnation of their actions toward Christ. Both soldiers and sanhedrists were in desperate straits, and were willing to do anything to save themselves.

The fact that this very important incident is not recorded by the other evangelists indicates only that the different accounts supplement each other, and it will not trouble any one who believes that the writers were directed and controlled by the Holy Spirit. How far the sanhedrists believed in the actual resurrection of Jesus, we do not know, and need not inquire. We do know that they were interested in hushing and concealing the report of Christ's resurrection, and we know also that the fact of his resurrection was fully accepted by a great company of disciples within two months, and that this story of his body having been stolen was only whispered about in

secret, and was never openly offered in opposition to the common belief.

The third appearance of our risen Lord was to Peter. Luke merely reports the fact, and Paul refers to it. When, where and in what circumstances the risen Jesus first met the disciple who had denied him, is not known, except that it occurred on that first Easter day. (Luke 24: 34.)

The fourth appearance is mentioned in what Dean Alford calls "The fragmentary addition to Mark;" and, in the gospel by Luke, we have the following extended and most interesting account of it. On the afternoon of that first Easter day, two of the disciples were on their way to a village called Emmaus, situated about eight miles from Jerusalem. As they communed with one another by the way, talking of the things that had happened, the risen Jesus "drew near and went with them, but their eyes were holden so that they should not know him." As he walked with them and heard their conversation, he said, "What communications are these that ye have one with another as ye walk?" They were so astonished at his question, that they stood still, and, looking at him, said, "Dost thou alone sojourn in Jerusalem and not know the things which are come to pass in these days?" Jesus said, "What things?" They replied, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people." Then, having told him how the chief priests and rulers had condemned and crucified Jesus, they added, with accents of hopeless sorrow, "We hoped that it was he who should redeem Israel." They had once cherished this great and inspiring hope, but the hope had vanished when they saw Jesus crucified, dead and buried. Having uttered this sad lament over the death of a great hope, they proceeded

with their story, saying, "Yea, and beside all this, it is now the third day since these things came to pass. Moreover certain women of our company amazed us, having been early at the tomb, and, when they found not the body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. And certain of them that were with us went to the tomb, and found it even so as the woman had said; but him they saw not."

When Jesus had heard all the words of these sad, perplexed, bewildered men, he said unto them, "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory?" Then he proceeded to interpret the predictions concerning himself, beginning with Moses and going through all the prophets. When they drew near to the village, Jesus "made as though he would go further," but they constrained him, saying, "Abide with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is now far spent." Jesus yielded to their constraint, and when he sat down to partake of the evening meal with them, "He took the bread and blessed it, and brake and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, was not our heart burning within us, while he spoke to us in the way, while he opened to us the Scriptures?"

Does the fact that these disciples did not at first recognize Jesus suggest any doubt as to his identity? Does it not rather indicate the truthfulness of the narrative? If any one had been constructing the narrative to confirm the reports of the resurrection, and without regard to the truth, would he have inserted in the narrative any such question as to identity? Surely not. This part of the narrative, instead of suggesting doubt, is adapted to con-



firm the faith of all who are willing to accept any report of what is supernatural. The whole narrative concerns the supernatural. There is the supernatural appearing of the risen Jesus; the supernatural influence on the eyes of the disciples, so that they could not see, and then the supernatural vanishing out of their sight when he became known to them in the breaking of bread. The whole narrative has on it the stamp of truthfulness, but it describes a supernatural event.

After the two disciples had recognized Jesus, and he had vanished out of their sight, they rose from the table at Emmaus and hastened back to Jerusalem. On their way to Emmaus they had been depressed by the death of a great hope; but, on their return to Jerusalem, their hearts are thrilled by the birth of a hope infinitely nobler and more inspiring. When they reach the city they find the eleven and other disciples gathered together, and, before they can tell their own glad story, they hear the rapturous exclamation, "The Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared unto Simon." Then they tell their own strange and happy experience on the way to Emmaus, and how Jesus was known unto them in the breaking of bread.

Both Luke and John tell of another most impressive appearance of the risen Jesus on that first ever-memorable Easter day. It took place in Jerusalem in a room where the disciples were assembled with closed doors for fear of the Jews. It is more than probable that it occurred in the assembly room where the two disciples, on their return from Emmaus, found the eleven. In order to harmonize Luke 24:33 with John 20:24, and reckon Luke 24:33-43 and John 20:19-25, as independent reports of the same events, we only need to assume that Thomas had gone out before the two disciples had completed the account of their experiences at Emmaus. Or,

we might assume that Luke spoke of the eleven as of the whole number of disciples, not specifying that one of the eleven was absent. Neither of these assumptions does any violence to the inspired record. Following, then, the order of events indicated by Luke, we see the disciples assembled with closed doors, listening to the different accounts of those who had seen their risen Lord, when suddenly Jesus, "stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you." This sudden appearance of the risen Saviour, when the doors were shut, terrified the disciples, and they thought him a spirit. All the reports that had come to them had not prepared them for looking calmly and gladly on the glorified body of their Master. They had often regarded him with reverential awe before his crucifixion, but his presence now was more than awe-inspiring. Seeing their fear, Jesus said, "Why are ye troubled? And wherefore do reasonings arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye behold me having."

When he had shown them his pierced hands and feet, and they were filled with a great joy that was mingled with wonder and doubt, he said unto them, "Have ye here anything to eat? and they gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and did eat before them." Then he said again, "Peace be unto you. As the Father has sent me into the world, even so send I you. And, when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whosoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained."

It is possible that the instructions spoken of, Luke 24: 44-49, may have been given at this time, and in this connection; but it seems more probable that the evangelist

has gathered into this brief space a summary of what the risen Jesus said to his disciples at different times.

This is all we know of our Lord's appearance on that first eventful resurrection day. He had appeared to Mary Magdalene, to the other women, to Peter, to the two disciples and in the evening to the ten in the room at Jerusalem. The darkness of despair had been succeeded by the dawn of a great hope; but it required time in order to any adequate realization of the great fact. Never before had one been raised from the dead to an immortal life, so that he could appear to men in this world. Lazarus, Jairus' daughter, the son of the widow of Nain, had been raised from the dead to mortal life, but here was something different. In their resurrection death was only baffled, and his victory delayed, but here death is conquered. It is not strange that it required more than a few hours for the disciples to realize this great fact and grasp its meaning. They were glad, but they were also bewildered and perplexed. They could say, "The Lord is risen indeed," but they could not comprehend the full meaning and mighty import of their own words. The Lord had breathed on them; he had bestowed on them the gift of the Holy Ghost; he had given them his benediction of peace, but these gifts were to become efficacious in the future.

Thomas was not present when Jesus appeared to the disciples on the evening of Easter day. He was a sincere man, but was melancholy, despondent, and inclined to doubt, and, when the other disciples said to him, "We have seen the Lord," he said, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." He was not willing to accept the testimony of others, however, convincing and overwhelming it might be. He must, with his own sense of

sight and touch confirm his faith if he is to believe. His conditions were unreasonable. He counted as worthless the testimony of other men who were as capable and truthful as himself. He maintained this position of unbelief for a week until the disciples were again assembled with closed doors, when Jesus again stood in the midst and said, "Peace be unto you." Then Jesus said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing." Thomas was convinced and exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Because thou hast seen, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

The skepticism of Thomas was overcome in such a way as to confirm the faith of others, but it was not commended. It had in it an element of honesty; but it was made up largely of self-centered pride and egotism. He excluded all evidence except the particular kind he saw fit to weigh and consider, and that was the evidence of his own senses. Credulity and skepticism frequently go hand in hand, and, no doubt, Thomas could have been deluded and deceived more easily than the other disciples, therefore, our Lord rebuked him, as he said, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

On the morning of the resurrection of Jesus an angel had directed the women to go quickly and tell the disciples that their risen Lord would go before them into Galilee and that they should see him there. Jesus also said to the women. "Go tell my brethren that they depart into Galilee, and there shall they see me." After his appearance to the eleven in Jerusalem they seem to have obeyed this command, for we next find seven of them by the sea of Tiberius, in Galilee. While they waited for the fulfillment of their Master's promise it was necessary for them

to do something in order to provide an honest means of support; and they resumed for a time their former avocation as fishermen.

Here, as elsewhere, Peter took his place as leader, and, with James, John, Thomas, Nathanael and two other disciples, spent a whole night on the lake without taking anything. At daybreak, when they were about two hundred cubits from the shore, Jesus appeared on the beach, and, calling to them, said, "Children, have ye aught to eat?" The disciples did not recognize their risen Lord and answered, "No." He then said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and ye shall find." They obeyed, and their net enclosed so many fish that they were not able to draw it into the boat. John was the first to recognize his Master, and he said to Peter, "It is the Lord." No time was needed for deliberation. The enthusiastic, impatient, impetuous Peter could not wait to bring the boat and the net to the land, but, girding his coat about him, he cast himself into the sea and swam ashore. The other disciples followed in the boat, dragging the net. When they reached the shore they saw a fire of coals with fish laid thereon and bread; and, when Jesus said, "Bring of the fish which ye have now taken," Peter went to the assistance of the other disciples and drew the net, containing "one hundred and fifty and three great fishes," unbroken to land. Then Jesus said to the disciples, "Come, break your fast." The disciples were so restrained by reverential awe that they did not dare to ask their Master anything concerning himself, "knowing that it was the Lord," but Jesus, taking the bread and the fish, gave them to the disciples.

After they had breakfasted, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these? In this question Jesus used the stronger Greek word that



best expressed the love of God; but Peter, in his reply, not only chose a different and weaker word, but left out the "more than these," saying humbly, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee." Jesus said in reply, "Feed my lambs." He then addressed Peter again, saying, "Simon, son of John, Lovest thou me?" He left out the comparison with others, that was adapted to remind Peter of his former boastfulness; Peter again humbly answered, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." Jesus then replied, "Tend, (or shepherd) my sheep." Then he said to Peter the third time, "Simon, son of John, lovest thou me?" This time Jesus substituted the weaker word that Peter had used, but his asking the third time deeply grieved Peter, for it reminded him so vividly of his thrice repeated denial, and he exclaimed, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." Again Jesus said, "Feed my sheep." After this he spoke to Peter about the trials through which he would be called to pass, and added, "Follow me."

All Peter's sad experience had not perfected his humility; for, while Jesus was talking with him about his own future and preparing him to meet it, Peter caught sight of John, and interrupted, saying, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" We do not know the motive of Peter in asking the question. He may have been moved by affection for John, or by a slight twinge of jealousy, or by mere curiosity; but, whatsoever his motive may have been, Jesus rebuked him, saying, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me."

This seventh appearance of our Lord and his conversation with Peter are so related by John that there can be no possible room for the thought that the disciples might have been deluded and deceived. It excludes all possibility of any such theory, and the reader is compelled to

either accept the facts as absolutely true, or to convict the disciples and the whole early Christian church of a deliberate conspiracy to deceive. No sane man can believe that the disciples were so deluded that they could imagine all this and believe it to be true if it were not true, and the theory of gradual legendary growth is impossible on account of lack of time between the dates of the events and the writing of this gospel.

The eighth recorded appearance of the risen Jesus took place on a mountain in Galilee. No hint is given as to what particular mountain was chosen, but it was probably the Mount of Beatitudes, or the Mount of Transfiguration, or some other well known resort of our Lord and his disciples. This, no doubt, was the appearance mentioned by Paul, 1st Cor. 15:6, when he was seen by more than five hundred brethren at once. This appearance was by special appointment and it was the time when Jesus first issued his great commission. Nevertheless, we have very little information concerning this meeting. Matthew says, "The eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him they worshipped him, but some doubted." If, as we have abundant reason for believing, not less than five hundred disciples were present with the eleven, none of the eleven need be included amongst the doubters.

While the record of this meeting is very brief, there is good reason for believing that Jesus talked at length with his disciples about the great commission that he was issuing. He had appointed the meeting for the purpose and had repeatedly directed his disciples to meet him in that mountain. Matthew puts on record the words of the commission, when he declares that Jesus said to the disciples, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven

and on earth. Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I command you ; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

It would have been presumptuous folly for the Roman emperor to have assembled his army and navy and given them any such commission for world wide conquest. It was a commission to make disciples of all the nations and to bring the individuals that composed these nations into such complete subjection that they would do whatsoever Jesus commanded them. Nevertheless these words were spoken by one who seemed to have neither army nor navy nor material resources of any kind. This commission was given to men, none of whom had ever been further than the Pillars of Hercules ; not one of whom had any accurate knowledge of even the geographical extent of the world or ever dreamed that the world in which he lived was a sphere. This commission was given to men who had no experience as diplomats or leaders of men. How could they hope to succeed ? Only on one condition, namely, that he who commissioned them was indeed clothed with all authority in heaven and upon earth and that he could and would fulfill his promise to be with them even unto the end of the world.

We, who live nearly two thousand years after this commission was given, see marvelous evidences of its progress toward fulfillment. That little company and their successors have gone forth from that mountain in Galilee and have made disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. They have brought men of every race and nation into loving subjection to King Jesus. The history of the Christian church is the convincing proof of the truth-

fulness of Jesus' words when he said, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth." Millions of Christians of succeeding generations have testified and will testify that Jesus has fulfilled to them his promise that he would be with his disciples as they sought to carry out his great commission. Millions of men and women in this generation, as they read the history of the Christian church and look out over the world, can sing,

"Oh where are kings and empires now,  
Of old that went and came?  
But, Lord, thy Church is praying yet,  
A thousand years the same."

The empire of Tiberius has crumbled and decayed, but the forces sent out by the risen Jesus are moving on, conquering the hearts of men, and establishing a world wide and everlasting kingdom.

Of the ninth appearance of Jesus after his resurrection, we have no knowledge except the incidental statement of the apostle Paul, who tells of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, and of his appearing to Cephas, to the twelve, and to the more than five hundred brethren, adding, "Then he appeared unto James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as unto one born out of due time, he appeared to me also." There are traditions concerning this appearance of Jesus to James, and there is one story preserved in the "Gospel to the Hebrews," but we have no information that is reliable.

Our knowledge of our risen Lord's last appearance is derived from the gospel by Luke, from the Acts of the Apostles and from the "fragmentary supplement" to the gospel by Mark. Comparing and combining these sources of information we learn that this last appearance of our

Lord to his disciples was at Jerusalem on the fortieth day after his resurrection. At this time Jesus reminded his disciples that they were to be his witnesses at Jerusalem, in Judea, in Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth. In order that they might be fitted and equipped to act as his true representatives in the world he charged them to tarry at Jerusalem until they should be clothed with power from on high. He reminded them of the promise of the Father, that he had already made, and assured them that they should be "baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence."

The disciples felt that they were facing another crisis in their history, and, not being yet able to understand their Master's teachings concerning his kingdom, they said to him, "Lord dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" To this question he replied, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath set within his own authority." Then "he led them out until they were over against Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them; and it came to pass that while he blessed them he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven," and a cloud received him out of their sight."

Jesus left his disciples, not through the tomb, but through the portals of the skies. They could not follow him, but they continued to look upward, seeking to pierce the clouds with their earthly vision until two men in white apparel stood by them and said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This Jesus who was received up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have beheld him go into heaven." When the disciples heard this message they worshipped their ascended Lord and returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the temple, blessing God.



Love's redeeming work is done. The seed of the woman has bruised the head of the serpent. What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son, has accomplished. In the fullness of time Christ, the Son of God, became man by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul; he was born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried, rose again the third day, ascended on high leading captivity captive, and, now, seated at the right hand of the Father, he sends forth his ascension gifts and fulfills all his promises. While the heavenly temple reechoes the shout,

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates;  
And be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors;  
And the King of glory will come in,"

Jesus enters and sits down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Enthroned in glory, Jesus did not forget his lonely, needy disciples whom he had left as his witnesses in this world. Ten days after his ascension, at Pentecost, when the disciples were tarrying and praying in Jerusalem, according to his direction, his promise and the prophecy of Joel were fulfilled. The Holy Spirit came in great power, and thenceforth, to the end of the world, every disciple may have with him his risen, reigning, Almighty Lord in the person of the Holy Spirit. Our great high priest has entered within the veil, and his disciples on this earth can sing,

"Where high the heavenly temple stands,  
The house of God not made with hands,  
A great High Priest our nature wears,  
The Guardian of mankind appears,"

## 508 JESUS CHRIST, THE REVEALER OF GOD

The risen Saviour is in heaven, making intercession for his people; he is their advocate at God's right hand. He is also present with every disciple in the person of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. Henceforth his dwelling is not only in heaven, but in every believing, humble, contrite heart. He is our living, loving omnipotent Friend, and we sing,

"All hail the power of Jesus' name,  
Let angels prostrate fall,  
Bring forth the royal diadem,  
And crown him Lord of all."

In the life of Jesus Christ we see the great mystery of Godliness, God manifest in flesh. He was in the beginning with God; he was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, believed on in the world, received up into glory. He is the eternal Son of God; he became man that he might redeem his people and save a lost world. He is the Unique Revealer of God. He is the only mediator between God and man; the unique reconciler of man to his fellow man. He was dead and is alive and lives forevermore. He is the resurrection and the life. To everyone that believeth he is precious. Let every knee bow to him, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory.

Amen and Amen.

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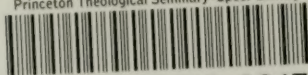




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